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MY FRIENDS

AND ACQUAINTANCE.

VOL. I.

MY FRIENDS

AND ACQUAINTANCE:

5-5-65-0

BEING

MEMORIALS, MIND-PORTRAITS,

AND

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

OF

Deceased Celebrities

OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY:

WITH

SELECTIONS FROM THEIR UNPUBLISHED LETTERS.

By P. G. PATMORE,

AUTHOR OF

"CHATSWORTH; OR, THE ROMANCE OF A WEEK;" "MARRIAGE IN MAY FAIR,"

ETC. ETC. ETC.

VOL. I.

LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

1854.

PREFACE.

"All true reputation begins and ends in the opinions of a man's intimate friends. He *is* what they think him, and in the last result will be thought to be so."—*Plain Speaker.*

My belief (with certain restrictions and reservations) in the general truth of the above axiom, has impelled me to note down from time to time during my literary life, and tempts me now to give to the world, the Memorials and Recollections which occupy the following pages.

These Memorials offer no Biographical Notices of the persons treated of; still less do they attempt any critical estimates of their intellectual powers and pretensions, and the published results of these. They are purely personal. If, therefore, I have persuaded myself that they are not wholly

unworthy of being given to the world, it is because, on deliberately reviewing them after a period scarcely shorter, in any one instance, than that prescribed by the poet-critic,* they seem capable of furnishing an acceptable and useful contribution to the Personal History of the Literature of our day.

My chief motives for allowing these volumes to appear during my lifetime are, the persuasion that the Note-Books, Diaries, and Correspondence from which their materials were composed and selected, include an amount of literary information and personal interest, that would certainly have caused their contents, sooner or later, to see the light in some form or other; and the conviction that, on the one hand, they ought not to do so without my own deliberate preparation and supervision, or, on the other hand, without that personal responsibility which should attend a work of this nature.

* With the exception of that portion of these Memorials which relate to Richard Brinsley Sheridan and his son, each compartment was prepared very shortly after the death of the person to whom it refers.

A few words seem necessary as to a small portion of the contents of the following pages. There is a species of literary career (such, for instance, as those of Scott and Byron), the details of which are the more interesting and instructive, the more they take the form of egotisms. There are others (and such has been mine), in regard to which egotism is an intrusion and an impertinence, except where the exigencies of some particular instance seem to call for it, with a view to some desirable end, not to be attained by any other means. The latter will, I sincerely hope, be found to be the case, with respect to whatever matter of a nature personal to myself has been allowed to find its way into the following pages. At all events, it has seemed to me that, in wholly excluding such matter, I must necessarily have suppressed other details, which the reader would not willingly have missed. If, however, I have, from oversight or inadvertence, fallen into the error in question (and a *studious* endeavour to avoid mistakes

of this nature sometimes leads to their commission), I solicit the forbearing indulgence of the critical reader.

With respect to the concluding portion of these Memorials—those relating to Richard Brinsley Sheridan and his son—though avowedly exceptional to the plan of the work, they are certainly not so to its objects. I trust, therefore, that the extraordinary literary interest which must attach to the discovery, now for the first time made public, of the Sheridan Autographs, will at least excuse this sole departure from my self-prescribed course, of treating only of those Deceased Celebrities of whom I could speak from more or less of personal knowledge.

Let me add, finally, that it was in the capacity of a humble *student* of the Literary Character that I was enabled to gather these Memorials, and in that capacity only I now submit them to the world.

London, June, 1854.

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CHARLES LAMB.

CHARLES LAMB.

I.

MY FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH CHARLES LAMB.—HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

My first introduction to Charles Lamb took place accidentally, at the lodgings of William Hazlitt, in Down-street, Piecadilly, in 1824, and under circumstances which have impressed it with peculiar vividness on my memory. Mr. Colburn had published anonymously, only two or three days before, a jeu-d'esprit of mine,* which aimed at being, to the prose literature of the day, something like what the "Rejected Addresses" was to the poetry,—with this marked difference, however, that my imitations were in a great measure *bonâ fide* ones, seeking to re-produce or represent, rather than to ridicule, the respective qualities and styles of the writers imitated; merely (for the sake of "effect")

* "Rejected Articles."

pushing their peculiarities to the verge of what the truth permitted.

As I was very young in author-craft at that time, and proportionately nervous as to the personal consequences that might attend a literary adventure of this peculiar character, I had called on Hazlitt on the day in question, in the hope of learning from him anything that might have transpired on the subject in his circle, he himself, and several of his personal friends, being among the imitated. We met from opposite directions at his door, and he had (what was the rarest thing in the world with him) a book in his hand, the uncut leaves of which he had been impatiently tearing open with his finger as he came along, and before we had reached the top of the stairs I found, to my no small alarm, it was the book which occupied all my thoughts.

This was an ominous commencement of my investigation; for the book contained a portrait of Hazlitt himself, drawn with a most unsparing hand, because professing to be *his own*, and to have been "Rejected," for obvious reasons, from his own "Spirit of

the Age," then recently published. Hazlitt's looks, however, which were an infallible criterion of the temper of his mind at the moment of consulting them, were quite sufficient to satisfy me that he was not displeased with what he had been reading. But before anything could be said on the matter beyond his asking me if I had seen the book, the door opened, and two persons entered whom, though I had never before seen either of them, I at once *felt* to be Charles Lamb and his sister.

The plot now thickened; for scarcely had I been introduced to the new-comers, when Hazlitt pointed to the book which he had laid on the table on their entrance, and said to Miss Lamb, "There's something there about Charles and you. Have you seen it?"

Miss Lamb immediately took up the book, and began to read to herself (evidently with no very good will) the opening paper, which was an imitation of an Essay by Elia.

Here was an accumulation of embarrassments, which no consideration could have induced me to encounter willingly, but which, being inevitable, I contrived to endure with

great apparent composure; though the awkwardness of my position was not a little enhanced by Miss Lamb presently turning to her brother, and expressing feelings about what she had read, which indicated that her first impression was anything but a favourable or agreeable one. Lamb himself seemed to take no interest whatever in the matter.

They stayed but a very short time, spoke only on the ordinary literary topics of the day, and on taking leave, Lamb pressed me to visit him at Islington, where he then resided.

During this brief interview with the Lambs, nothing in the smallest degree characteristic occurred; and if I had not seen Charles Lamb again, I might have set him down as an ordinary person, whose literary eccentricities and oddities had been gratuitously transferred by report to his personal character and way of life.

I visited Lamb shortly afterwards at his house in Colnbrook Row, and an intimacy ensued which lasted till his death, if, indeed, one is entitled to describe as intimacy an intercourse which, as in the case of all the

rest of Lamb's friends, consisted of pleasant visits on the one part, and a gratified and grateful reception of them on the other, which seemed intended to intimate that there was nothing he did not owe you, and was not willing to pay, in return for the dispensation you granted him from the ceremony of visiting you in return: for the Lambs rarely left home, and when they did, were never themselves till they got back again.

The foregoing remarks point at what I afterwards learned to consider as the leading and distinctive feature of Lamb's intellectual character, and also that of his sister—at least at and after the time at which I first became acquainted with them. All their personal thoughts, feelings, and associations were so entirely centred in those of each other, that it was only by an almost painful effort they were allowed to wander elsewhere, even at the brief intervals claimed by that social intercourse which they nevertheless could not persuade themselves wholly to shun. They had been for so many years accustomed to look to each other alone for sympathy and support, that they could

scarcely believe these to exist for them apart from themselves;*—and the perpetual consciousness of this mutual failing, in a social point of view, and the perpetual sense of its results upon their intellectual characters respectively, gave to both of them an absent and embarrassed air—always excepting when they sought and found temporary shelter from it in that profuse and somewhat indiscriminate hospitality, which, at this period, marked their simple home at Islington.

It is true they were, perhaps, never so happy as when surrounded by those friends and acquaintance who sought them at their own house. But this was at best a happiness little suited to the intellectual habits and temperament of either, and one, therefore, for which they paid much more than it was worth to them—*so* much more that they, not long after the period to which I am now alluding, sought refuge from the evil in a remedy that was worse than the disease. Always in extremes, and being now able, by

* See at p. 73 an explanation of the terrible reason for this—which, at the time these pages were written, had not been disclosed to the world.

his retirement from the India House, to fix their whereabout wherever they pleased, they fled from the too-exciting scenes of the great metropolis to the (for them) anything but "populous solitude" of that country life for which they were equally unfitted and unprepared.

What I have further to say of Charles Lamb, I shall leave nearly in the words in which it was recorded shortly after his death in 1834, while the impression of his remarkable intellectual qualities, and their results upon his personal character, were fresh in my recollection, and therefore likely to be less unworthy the reader's attention than anything I could now substitute in their place.

What immediately follows, however, was written during Lamb's lifetime; and as it will serve as a sort of *personal* introduction of him to the reader, I shall give it precedence of those Recollections which were not written till after his death. The following descriptive passages are part of what was intended to form a group of Sketches from Real Life, the imaginary scene of which was the Athenæum Club House.

Observe that diminutive figure, all in black (the head and face only half visible from beneath the penthouse of an ill-fitting hat), that has just entered the splendid and luxurious apartment in which we are taking our sketches, and is looking about with an air of odd perplexity, half timid, half bold, as if—

"Wondering how the devil it got there."

And well it may, for its owner is as little dependent on modern luxury for *his* comforts, as if he had just been disinterred by the genius of Bulwer from the oblivion of Pompeii.

Doubtless in passing down Waterloo-place, from his friend Moxon's, with the intention of *losing* his way home to Islington through St. James's Park, the statue of the Goddess of Wisdom over our portico attracted his eye, and his thoughts naturally jumped to the conclusion that the temple over which her effigy presides can be devoted to no less dignified purposes than she was wont to patronise in those times of which this "ignorant present" is apt to make such little use. And that such a temple should be other than open to all comers, our exquisite "modern

antique" could not for an instant doubt. In therefore he walks, unmolested by the liveried menials of the vestibule; for "there's a divinity doth hedge" a man of genius, that makes his person in some sort sacred, even to the wearer of a laced coat, be he lacquey or lord. During the gaping wonder of the waiters at his advent, he has mounted the staircase,—glancing with a look of momentary surprise at the undraped figure of the goddess of Love and Beauty, which strikes him as a novel but by no means inappropriate introduction into a Temple of Wisdom; and entering the first door that seems likely to lead towards the penetralia of the place, behold him among us! . . . . It is odd how appearances sometimes belie themselves. If all here present were compelled to guess the worldly calling of the object of our attention, nine out of ten would pronounce for his being a half-starved country curate, who has wandered up to the metropolis on a week's leave of absence, to make his fortune, and immortalize his name, by a volume of MS. sermons. And the rusty suit of black, the knee breeches met by high gaiters of the same,

and the contemplative gravity of the face and air, aid the delusion—a delusion which those who know him cannot think of without a smile, and which he himself would hail the announcement of with a shout of laughter, of a kind seldom heard within these refined and fastidious walls;—laughter, however, in which there would be no touch of derision at the association that called it forth.

But see—he has removed his hat; and all vestige of the vestry has disappeared; for the operation has revealed a countenance, the traits and characteristics of which never yet appertained to the follower of *any* exclusive profession or calling—not even the sacred one which has for its object to lift men from the commerce of earth to that of immortality.

If read aright, there is not a finer countenance extant than that of Charles Lamb, nor one that more exquisitely and eloquently shadows forth the soul and spirit that give it life and speech. It is a face that would have taxed the genius of Titian himself to set it forth truly—so varied and almost contradictory, in appearance, are the evidences and intimations it includes. There are lines

of the loftiest thought and the purest wisdom, intersected by others traced by the hand of Folly herself while sporting there in her cap and bells. There is the deepest and the gentlest love for mankind, inextricably mingled with marks of the most bitter and biting contempt for men and their ways and works. There is the far-darting glance of high and searching intellect, quelled and as it were hoodwinked, by an ever-present sense of the petty and peddling limits of even its widest and wildest range. There is the profound melancholy of the poetic temperament, brooding fondly over the imagination of what it feels to be unattainable,—mixed into a "chance medley" of all sorts of quips, quibbles, and quiddities of the brain. There is the gravity of the sage contending with the gaiety of the humorist; the pride and solemnity of the philosophic observer of human nature, melting into the innocent playfulness of the child, and the mad fun of the schoolboy. In short, to sum up the case as paradoxically as we have been tempted, from the peculiar nature of the theme, to commence and carry it on, Charles Lamb's

face, like his other attributes, amounts to a "contradiction in terms,"—with this special qualification in every particular of the case, that the contradiction is invariably in favour of right, of truth, and of good, wherever these are brought into momentary contention with their opposites.

So much for a sketch that, in its accessories at least, is in some sort a "fancy" one. The details of the description which follows refer to a period immediately preceding his death.

I do not know whether Lamb had any oriental blood in his veins; but certainly the most marked complexional characteristic of his head was a *Jewish* look, which pervaded every portion of it, even to the sallow and uniform complexion, and the black and crisp hair standing off loosely from the head, as if every single hair were independent of the rest. The nose, too, was large and slightly hooked, and the chin rounded and elevated to correspond. There was altogether a *Rabbinical* look about Lamb's head which was at once striking and impressive.

Thus much of form chiefly. In point of intellectual character and expression, a finer face was never seen, nor one more fully, however vaguely, corresponding with the mind whose features it interpreted. There was the gravity usually engendered by a life passed in book-learning, without the slightest tinge of that assumption and affectation which almost always attend the gravity *so* engendered; the intensity and elevation of general expression that mark high genius, without any of its pretension and its oddity; the sadness waiting on fruitless thoughts and baffled aspirations, but no evidences of that spirit of scorning and contempt which these are apt to engender. Above all, there was a pervading sweetness and gentleness which went straight to the heart of every one who looked on it; and not the less so, perhaps, that it bore about it an air, a something, seeming to tell that it was, not *put on*—for nothing would be more unjust than to tax Lamb with assuming anything, even a virtue, which he did not possess—but preserved and persevered in, spite of opposing and

contradictory feelings within, that struggled in vain for mastery. It was a thing to remind you of that painful smile which bodily disease and agony will sometimes put on, to conceal their sufferings from the observation of those they love.

I feel it a very difficult and delicate task to speak of this peculiar feature of Lamb's physiognomy; and the more so that, from never having seen it noted and observed by others of his friends, I am by no means sure of meeting with an accordance in the opinions, or rather the feelings, of those who knew him as well, or even better than I did. But I am sure that the peculiarity I speak of was there, and therefore venture to allude to it for a moment longer, with a view to its apparent explanation. The truth then is, that Lamb was what is by no means so uncommon or so contradictory a character as the unobservant may deem it: he was a gentle, amiable, and tender-hearted misanthrope. He hated and despised men with his mind and judgment, in proportion as (and precisely because) he loved and yearned towards them in his

heart; and individually, he loved those best whom everybody else hated, and for the very reasons for which others hated them. He generally through life had two or three especial pets, who were always the most disagreeable people in the world—*to* the world. To be taken into Lamb's favour and protection you had only to get discarded, defamed, and shunned by everybody else; and if you deserved this treatment, so much the better! If I may venture so to express myself, there was in Lamb's eyes a sort of sacredness in sin, on account of its sure ill consequences to the sinner; and he seemed to open his arms and his heart to the rejected and reviled of mankind in a spirit kindred at least with that of the Deity.

Returning to my description of Lamb's personal appearance,—his head might have belonged to a full-sized person, but it was set upon a figure so *petite* that it took an appearance of inappropriate largeness by comparison. This was the only striking peculiarity in the *ensemble* of his figure; in other respects it was pleasing and well-formed, but so slight and delicate as to bear

the appearance of extreme spareness, as if of a man air-fed, instead of one rejoicing in a proverbial predilection for "roast pig." The only defect of his figure was that the legs were too slight even for the slight body.

Lamb had laid aside his snuff-coloured suit long before I knew him, and was never seen in anything but a suit of black, with knee-breeches and gaiters, and black worsted or silk stockings. Probably he was induced to admit this innovation by a sort of compromise with his affection for the colour of other years; for though his dress was, by courtesy, "black," he always contrived that it should exist in a condition of rusty brown.

The only way in which I can account for Lamb's having been faithless to his former colour, after having stood by it through a daily ordeal, for twenty years, at the Long Room of the India House, is, that he was placarded out of it by his dear friend Wordsworth's description of the personal appearance of his *ideal* of a poet, which can scarcely have been drawn from any but Lamb himself—so exact is the likeness in several of its

leading features.* Now, Lamb did not like to be taken for a poet, nor, indeed, for anything else in particular; so latterly he made a point of dressing so as to be taken, by ninety-nine people out of every hundred who looked upon him, for a Methodist preacher—which was just the very last he was like, or would like to be taken for! This was one of his little wilful contradictions.

---

* See "A Poet's Epitaph," in the Lyrical Ballads.

But who is he *with modest looks,*
And clad in homely russet brown,
Who murmurs near the running brooks
A music sweeter than their own?

He is retired as noon-tide dew,
Or fountain in a noon-day grove;
And you must love him ere to you
He will seem worthy of your love.

II.

CHARLES LAMB AT HOME, ABROAD, AND AMONG HIS BOOKS.

I AM bound to say that my acquaintance with Charles Lamb, during his residence at Islington, offered little to confirm the associations which Hazlitt has connected with those palmy days when his residence was the resort of all those who "called Admiral Burney friend." When I knew him, his house had, for various reasons wholly unconnected with any change in the Lambs themselves, degenerated, for the most part, into the trysting place of a little anomalous coterie of strenuous idlers and "Curious Impertinents," who, without the smallest power of appreciating the qualities of mind and character which nominally brought them together, came there to pass the time under a species of excitement a little different from their ordinary modes of social intercourse—alternating "an evening at the Lambs'" with

a half-price to the play, or a visit to the wild beasts at Exeter 'Change. Certain it is, that not one out of twenty ever came there with the remotest thought of enjoying the society of Lamb and his sister, and quite as little for that of the distinguished men who still occasionally sought the residence of Lamb with that view. Still more certain is it that Lamb himself did not shine in this sort of "mixed company"—this strange olla podrida of intellect, oddity, and commonplace. It might be an "Entertaining Miscellany" to him, but it was one in which he rarely or never published any of those exquisite Eliaisms of which his mind and heart were made up. He was everything that was kind and cordial in his welcome to all comers, and his sister used to bustle and potter about like a gentle housewife, to make everybody comfortable; but you might almost as well have been in the apartments of any other clerk of the India House, for anything you heard that was deserving of note or recollection.

The fact is, that in ordinary society, if Lamb was not an ordinary man, he was only an odd and strange one—displaying no

superior knowledge or wit or wisdom or eloquence, but only that invariable accompaniment of genius, a moral incapacity to subside into the conventional cant or the flat commonplace of everyday life. He would do anything to gratify his guests but that. He would joke, or mystify, or pun, or play the buffoon; but he could not bring himself to prose, or preach, or play the philosopher. He could not be *himself* (for others, I mean) except when something out of himself made him so; but he could not be anything at variance with himself to please a king.

The consequence was, that to those who did not know him, or, knowing, did not or could not appreciate him, Lamb often passed for something between an imbecile, a brute, and a buffoon; and the first impression he made on ordinary people was always unfavourable—sometimes to a violent and repulsive degree. Hazlitt has somewhere said of him in substance (with about an equal portion of truth and exaggeration, but with an exact *feeling* of the truth in the very exaggeration) that Lamb was always on a par with his company, however high or however low it

might be. But, somehow or other, silly or ridiculous people have an instinct that makes them feel it as a sort of personal offence if you treat them as if you fancied yourself no better than they. They know it to be a hoax upon them, manage it how you may, and they resent it accordingly.

Now, Lamb was very apt to play fast and loose with his literary reputation in this way, and would certainly rather have passed with nine-tenths of the world for a fool than for a philosopher, a wit, or a man of letters. And I cannot help thinking it was his deep sympathy with mankind, and especially with the poor, whether in spirit or in purse, that was the cause of this. He did not like to be thought different from his fellow-men, and he knew that, in the vocabulary of the ordinary world, "a man of genius" seldom means anything better, and often something worse, than an object of mingled fear, pity, and contempt.

The truth is, that the Elia of private life could be known and appreciated only by his friends and intimates, and even by them oftenest at home. He shone, and was at

his literary and social reputation, only in a tête-à-tête, or in those unpremeditated colloquies over his own table, or by his own fireside, in which his sister and one or two more friends took part, and in which every inanimate object about him was as familiar as the "household words" in which he uttered his deep and subtle thoughts, his quaint and strange fancies, and his sweet and humane philosophy. Under these circumstances, he was perfectly and emphatically a *natural* person, and there was not a vestige of that startling oddity and extravagance which subjected him to the charge of affecting to be "singular" and "original" in his notions, feelings, and opinions.

In any other species of "company" than that to which I have just referred, however cultivated or intellectual it might be, Lamb was unquestionably liable to the charge of seeming to court attention by the strangeness and novelty of his opinions, rather than by their justness and truth—he was *liable* and open to this charge, but as certainly he did not *deserve* it; for affectation supposes a something assumed, put on, pretended—and

of this, Lamb was physically as well as morally incapable. His strangeness and oddity under the one set of circumstances, was as natural to him as his naturalness and simplicity under the other. In the former case, he was not at ease—not a free agent—not his own man; but

> Cabin'd, cribbed, confined,
> Bound in by saucy doubts and fears

that were cast about him by his "reputation" —which trammelled and hampered him by claims that he had neither the strength cordially to repudiate, nor the weakness cordially to embrace; and in struggling between the two inclinations, he was able to exhibit nothing but the salient and superficial points of his mind and character, as moulded and modified by a state of society so utterly at variance with all his own deliberate views and feelings, as to what it might be, or at least, might have been, that he shrank from the contemplation of it with an almost convulsive movement of pain and disgust, or sought refuge from it in the solitary places of his own thoughts and fancies. When forced into contact with "the world's true world-

lings," being anything but one of themselves, he knew that he could not show like them, and yet feared to pain or affront their feelings by seeming too widely different; and between the two it was impossible to guess beforehand what he would do or be under any given circumstances; he himself being the last person capable of predicating on the point. The consequence was, that when the exigency arrived, he was anything or nothing, as the turn of the case or the temper of the moment might impel him; he was equally likely to outrage or to delight the persons in whose company he might fall, or else, to be regarded by them as a mere piece of human still-life, claiming no more notice or remembrance than an old-fashioned portrait, or a piece of odd-looking old china.

What an exquisite contrast to all this did Lamb's intercourse with his friends present! Then, and then only, was he himself; for assuredly he was not so when in the sole company of his own thoughts, unless when they were communing with those of his dearest friends of all—his old books—his "midnight darlings," as he endearingly calls

them somewhere, in a tone and spirit which prove that he loved them better than any of his friends of the living world, and cared not if the latter knew it.

Yet I'm afraid it does not follow that Lamb was happier among his books than with his friends; he was only more *himself*. In fact, there was a constitutional sadness about Lamb's mind, which nothing could overcome but an actual personal interchange of thought and sentiment with those, whoever they might be, whose tone and cast of intellect were in some sort correspondent with his own. And though in his intercourse with his beloved old books, he found infinitely more of this correspondence than the minds of his most choice living friends could furnish; yet in the former there was wanting that *reciprocal* action which constitutes the soul of human intercourse. Lamb could listen with delight to the talk of his books, but they could not listen to him in return; and his spirit was so essentially and emphatically a *human* one, that it was only in the performance and interchange of human offices and instincts it could exist in its happiest

form and aspect. Unlike his friends, Coleridge and Wordsworth, Lamb was not a man whose mind was sufficient to itself, and could dwell for ever, if need were, in the world of its own thoughts, or that which the thoughts of others had created for it. He delighted to *visit* those worlds, and found there, it may be, his purest and loftiest pleasures. But the *home* of his spirit was the face of the common earth, and in the absence of human faces and sympathies, it longed and yearned for them with a hunger that nothing else could satisfy.

III.

LAMB AND HIS PET DOG.—LETTERS—C. LAMB TO P. G. PATMORE.—P. G. PATMORE TO C. LAMB.—THE LAMBS AT ENFIELD.

JUST before the Lambs quitted the metropolis for the voluntary banishment of Enfield Chace, they came to spend a day with me at Fulham, and brought with them a companion, who, "dumb animal" though it was, had for some time past been in the habit of giving play to one of Charles Lamb's most amiable characteristics—that of sacrificing his own feelings and inclinations to those of others. This was a large and very handsome dog, of a rather curious and singularly sagacious breed, which had belonged to Thomas Hood, and at the time I speak of, and to oblige both dog and master, had been transferred to the Lambs, —who made a great pet of him, to the entire disturbance and discomfiture, as it appeared, of all Lamb's habits of life, but especially of that most favourite and salutary

of all, his long and heretofore solitary suburban walks: for Dash (that was the dog's name) would never allow Lamb to quit the house without him, and, when out, would never go anywhere but precisely where it pleased himself. The consequence was, that Lamb made himself a perfect slave to this dog,—who was always half-a-mile off from his companion, either before or behind, scouring the fields or roads in all directions, up and down "all manner of streets," and keeping his attendant in a perfect fever of anxiety and irritation, from his fear of losing him on the one hand, and his reluctance to put the needful restraint upon him on the other. Dash perfectly well knew his host's amiable weakness in this respect, and took a due dog-like advantage of it. In the Regent's Park in particular Dash had his quasi-master completely at his mercy; for the moment they got within the ring, he used to squeeze himself through the railing, and disappear for half-an-hour together in the then enclosed and thickly planted greensward, knowing perfectly well that Lamb did not dare to move

from the spot where he (Dash) had disappeared till he thought proper to show himself again. And they used to take this walk oftener than any other, precisely because Dash liked it and Lamb did not.

The performance of the Pig-driver that Leigh Hunt describes so capitally in the "Companion," must have been an easy and straightforward thing compared with this enterprise of the dear couple in conducting Dash from Islington to Fulham. It appeared, however, that they had not undertaken it this time purely for Dash's gratification; but (as I had often admired the dog) to ask me if I would accept him,—"if only out of charity," said Miss Lamb, "for if we keep him much longer, he'll be the death of Charles."

I readily took charge of the unruly favourite, and soon found, as I suspected, that his wild and wilful ways were a pure imposition upon the easy temper of Lamb; for as soon as he found himself in the keeping of one who knew what dog-decorum was, he subsided into the best bred and best behaved of his species.

A few weeks after I had taken charge of

Dash, I received the following letter from Lamb, who had now removed to Enfield Chace. Exquisitely characteristic of their writer as are the "Elia" Essays of Charles Lamb, I doubt if any one of them is superior in this respect to the letter I am about to cite:—

"CHARLES LAMB TO P. G. PATMORE.

Mrs. Leishman's, Chace, Enfield.

"DEAR PATMORE—Excuse my anxiety—but how is Dash? (I should have asked if Mrs. Patmore kept her rules and was improving—but Dash came uppermost. The order of our thoughts should be the order of our writing.) Goes he muzzled, or *aperto ore?* Are his intellects sound, or does he wander a little in *his* conversation?* You cannot be too careful to watch the first symptoms of incoherence. The first illogical snarl he makes, to St. Luke's with him. All the dogs here are going mad, if you believe the overseers; but I protest they seem to me very rational and collected. But nothing is

* A sly hint, I suspect, to one who did—and does.

so deceitful as mad people to those who are not used to them. Try him with hot water. If he wont lick it up, it is a sign he does not like it. Does his tail wag horizontally or perpendicularly? That has decided the fate of many dogs in Enfield. Is his general deportment cheerful? I mean when he is pleased—for otherwise there is no judging. You can't be too careful. Has he bit any of the children yet? If he has, have them shot, and keep *him* for curiosity, to see if it was the hydrophobia. They say all our army in India had it at one time—but that was in *Hyder*-Ally's time. Do you get paunch for him? Take care the sheep was sane. You might pull out his teeth (if he would let you), and then you need not mind if he were as mad as a bedlamite. It would be rather fun to see his odd ways. It might amuse Mrs. Patmore and the children. They'd have more sense than he! He'd be like a Fool kept in the family, to keep the household in good humour with their own understanding. You might teach him the mad dance set to the mad howl. *Madge Owl-et* would

nothing to him. 'My, how he capers!' (One of the children speaks this.) . . . . .

(*Here three lines are erased.*)

"What I scratch out is a German quotation from Lessing on the bite of rabid animals; but, I remember, you don't read German. But Mrs. Patmore may, so I wish I had let it stand. The meaning in English is—'Avoid to approach an animal suspected of madness, as you would avoid a fire or a precipice:'—which I think is a sensible observation. The Germans are certainly profounder than we.

"If the slightest suspicion arises in your breast, that all is not right with him (Dash), muzzle him, and lead him in a string (common packthread will do; he don't care for twist) to Hood's, his quondam master, and he'll take him in at any time. You may mention your suspicion or not, as you like, or as you think it may wound or not Mr. H.'s feelings. Hood, I know, will wink at a few follies in Dash, in consideration of his former sense. Besides, Hood is deaf, and if you hinted anything, ten to one he would not hear you. Besides, you will have discharged your con-

science, and laid the child at the right door, as they say.

We are dawdling our time away very idly and pleasantly, at a Mrs Leishman's, Chace, Enfield, where, if you come a-hunting, we can give you cold meat and a tankard. Her husband is a tailor; but that, you know, does not make her one. I knew a jailor (which rhymes), but his wife was a fine lady.

"Let us hear from you respecting Mrs. Patmore's regimen. I send my love in a —— to Dash. C. LAMB."

On the *outside* of the letter (a letter sent by the public post) is written—"Seriously, I wish you would call on Hood when you are that way. He's a capital fellow. I sent him a couple of poems—one ordered by his wife, and written to order; and 'tis a week since, and I've not heard from him. I fear something is the matter.

"Omitted within:

"Our kindest remembrance to Mrs. P."

Is the reader acquainted with anything in its way more exquisite than this letter, in the whole circle of our epistolary literature—

anything more buoyant with wit, drollery, and humour, and, at the same time more pregnant with that *spirit of self-contradiction* which was so singularly characteristic of Lamb in almost all he said and did. His broadest jokes have a sentiment in them, and his most subtle and refined sentiment always takes the form of a joke. Whole pages or chapters of critical comment on his intellectual character would not speak its chief features more clearly and emphatically than the three first lines of this letter, especially when coupled with the three last—"Excuse my anxiety—but how is Dash? I should have asked if Mrs. Patmore kept her rules, and was improving; but Dash came uppermost."—"Let us hear from you respecting Mrs. P.'s regimen. I send my love in a —— to Dash." Lively and sincere as was the interest that he felt for the lady referred to (whose health was at that time in a very delicate state), he never would have written the letter at all, but for his still livelier interest about Dash. And he could not, and would not, conceal the truth—though he did not object to disguise it in the form of a seeming joke.

As Dash was one of the very few objects of Lamb's "Hero-worship," the reader may like to learn a little more about him from my reply to the foregoing letter:—

P. G. PATMORE TO CHARLES LAMB.

"DEAR LAMB,—Dash is very mad indeed. As I knew you would be shocked to hear it, I did not volunteer to trouble your peaceful retreat by the sad information, thinking it could do no good, either to you, to Dash, to us, or to the innocent creature that he has already bitten, or to those he may (please God) bite hereafter. But when you ask it of me as a friend, I cannot withhold the truth from you. The poor little patient has resolutely refused to touch *water* (either hot or cold) ever since, and if we attempt to force it down her throat, she scratches, grins, fights, makes faces, and utters strange noises, showing every recognised symptom of being very mad indeed. . . . As for your panacea (of shooting the bitten one), we utterly set our faces against it, not thinking death 'a happy release' under any given circumstances, and being specially averse to

it. under circumstances given by our own neglect.

"By the bye, it has just occurred to me, that the fact of the poor little sufferer making a noise more like a cat's than a dog's, may possibly indicate that she is not quite so mad as we at first feared. Still there is no saying but the symptom may be one of aggravation. Indeed I shouldn't wonder if the 'faculty' preferred the *bark*, as that (under the queer name of *quinine*) has been getting very fashionable among them of late.

"I wish you could have seen the poor little patient before we got rid of her—how she scoured round the kitchen among the pots and pans, scampered about the garden, and clambered up to the tops of the highest trees. (No symptoms of *high*-drophobia, you will say, in that). . . .

"By the bye again, I have entirely forgotten to tell you, that the injured innocent is not one of *our* children, but of the cat's; and this reminds me to tell you that, putting cats out of the question (to which, like some of his so-called 'betters,' Dash has evidently a 'natural antipathy'), he comports himself

in all other respects as a sane and well-bred dog should do. In fact, his distemper, I am happy to tell you, is clearly not insanity, but only a temporary hallucination or monomania in regard (want of regard, you will say) to one particular species of his fellow-creatures —videlicet, cats. (For the delicate distinctions in these cases, see Haslam *passim;* or pass him, if you prefer it). . . .

"With respect to the second subject of your kind inquiries—the lady, and the success of her prescribed regimen—I will not say that she absolutely *barks* at the sight of water when proffered to her, but she shakes her head, and sighs piteously, which are bad symptoms. In sober seriousness, her watery regimen does not yet show any signs of doing her good, and we have now finally determined on going to France for the summer, and shall leave North End, with that purpose, in about three weeks.

"I was going up to Colnbrook Cottage on the very Monday that you left; but (for a wonder) I took the precaution of calling on your ancient friend at the factory in my way, and learned that you had left. . . .

I hope you will not feel yourselves justified in remaining long at Enfield, for if you do, I shall certainly devise some means of getting down to see you, in which case I shall inevitably stay very late at night, and in all human probability shall be stopped and robbed in coming back; so that your sister, if not you, will see the propriety of your returning to town as soon as may be.

"Talking of being stopped on the King's Highway, reminds me of Dash's last exploit. He was out at near dusk, down the lane, a few nights ago, with his mistress (who is as fond of him as his master—please to be careful how you construe this last equivocally expressed phrase, and don't make the 'master' an accusative case), when Dash attacked a carpenter, armed with a large saw—not Dash, but the carpenter — and a 'wise saw' it turned out, for its teeth protected him from Dash's, and a battle royal ensued, worthy the Surrey Theatre. Mrs. Patmore says that it was really frightful to see the saw, and the way in which it and Dash gnashed their teeth at each other." . . . .

"Ever yours, P. G. P."

IV.

THE LAMBS' DOMESTIC ARRANGEMENTS.—TOO HONEST BY HALF.

ANOTHER characteristic instance of Lamb's sacrifice of his own most cherished habits and feelings to those of other people was in the case of a favourite servant, "Beckey," to whose will and pleasure both Charles Lamb and his sister were as much at the mercy as they were to those of Dash.

This Beckey was an excellent person in her way, and not the worse that she had not the happiness of comprehending the difference between genius and common sense—between "an author" and an ordinary man. Accordingly, having a real regard for her master and mistress, and a strong impression of what was or was not "good for them," she used not seldom to take the liberty of telling them "a bit of her mind," when they did anything that she considered to be "odd" or out of the way. And as (to do them jus-

tice) their whole life and behaviour were as little directed by the rules of common-place as could well be, Beckey had plenty of occasions for the exercise of her self-imposed task, of instructing her master and mistress in the ways of the world. Beckey, too, piqued herself on her previous experience in observing and treating the vagaries of extraordinary people; for she had lived some years with Hazlitt before she went to the Lambs.

In performing the duties of housekeeping the Lambs were something like an excellent friend of mine, who, when a tradesman brings him home a pair of particularly easy boots, or any other object perfectionated in a way that peculiarly takes his fancy, inquires the price, and if it happens to be at all within decent tradesmanlike limits, says—"No—I cannot give you that price—it is too little—you cannot afford it, I'm sure—I shall give you so and so"—naming a third or fourth more than the price demanded. If the Lambs' baker, for example, had charged them (as it is said bakers have been known to do) a dozen loaves in their weekly bill, when they must have known that they had not eaten

two-thirds of that number, the last thing they would have thought of was complaining of the overcharge. If they had not consumed the proper quantity to remunerate him for the trouble of serving them, it was not the baker's fault, and the least they could do was to pay for it!

Now this kind of logic was utterly lost upon Beckey, and she would not hear of it. Her master and mistress, she fully admitted, had a right to be as extravagant as they pleased; but they had no right to confound the distinctions between honesty and roguery, and it was what she would not permit.

There are few of us who would not duly prize a domestic who had honesty and wit enough to protect us from the consequences of our own carelessness or indifference; but where is the one who, like Lamb, without caring one farthing for the advantages he might derive from Beckey's unimpeachable honesty, and her genius for going the best way to market, could not merely overlook, but be highly gratified and amused by, the ineffable airs of superiority, amounting to nothing less than a sort of personal patronage, which she

assumed on the strength of these? The truth is, that Beckey used to take unwarrantable liberties with her quasi-master and mistress—liberties that amounted to what are usually deemed, in such cases, gross and unpardonable impertinences. Yet I do not believe any of their friends ever heard a complaint or a harsh word uttered of her, much less *to* her; and I believe there was no inconvenience or privation they would not have submitted to, rather than exchange her blunt honesty for the servile civility, whether accompanied by honesty or not, of anybody else. And I believe, when Beckey at last left them, to be married, it was this circumstance, much more than anything else, which caused them to give up housekeeping, never afterwards to resume it.

Another notable instance may here be cited of Lamb's habitual disposition to bend and vail his own feelings, inclinations, and personal comforts to those of other people. When they left off housekeeping, and went to reside at Enfield, they boarded for some time in the house of a reputable old couple, to whom they paid, for the plainest possible

accommodation, a price almost sufficient to keep all the household twice over, but where, nevertheless, they were expected to pay for every extra cup of tea, or any other refreshment, they might offer to any occasional visitor. Lamb soon found out the mistake he had made in connecting himself with these people, and did not fail to philosophise (to his friends) on their blind stupidity, in thus risking what was almost their sole means of support, in order to screw an extra shilling out of his easy temper. But he endured it patiently, nevertheless. One circumstance I remember his telling me with great glee, which was evidently unmixed with any anger or annoyance at the cupidity of these people, but only at its blindness. Wordsworth and another friend had just been down to see them, and had taken tea; and in the next week's bill *one* of the extra "teas" was charged an extra sixpence, and on Lamb's inquiring what this meant, the reply was, that "the elderly gentleman," meaning Wordsworth, "had taken such a quantity of sugar in his tea."

Yet this sort of thing Lamb bore patiently,

month after month, for years, under the feeling, or rather on the express plea of—What was to become of the poor people if he left them?

The Protectionists never pleaded harder for their "vested rights" than did Lamb for the claims of these people to continue to live upon him, and affront him every now and then into the bargain, because they had been permitted to begin to do so.

V.

LAMB'S SYMPATHIES AND SELF-SACRIFICES. HIS LOVE OF LONDON AND HATRED OF THE COUNTRY.

I'M afraid it must not be concluded that Lamb gained in personal comfort and happiness by the change of life consequent on his removal from London. It is true he got rid of all those visitors who sought him only for his oddity or his reputation, and retained those only between whom and himself there could be any real interchange of intellect and affection. But it may be doubted whether the former were not more necessary to him than the latter;—for it was with the poor and lowly (whether in spirit or in purse) that Lamb chiefly sympathized, and with them he could hold communion only in the busy scenes of metropolitan life; and that communion, either in imagination or in fact, was necessary to the due exercise and healthy tone of his mind. The higher class of communion he could at all times

find, when he needed it, in books; but that living sympathy which alone came home to his bosom, he could compass nowhere but in the living world of towns and cities.

In fact, Lamb's retirement, first from the pleasant monotony of a public office, and afterwards from the busy idleness of his beloved London, was the crowning one of those self-sacrifices which he was ever ready to make at the shrine of human affection; sacrifices not the less noble and beautiful that they were submitted to with an ill grace; for what sacrifices are those which it costs us nothing to make? It was for the greater security of his sister's health that Lamb retired from London; and, in doing so, he as much offered himself a sacrifice for *her* well-being as the martyrs and heroes of other times did for their religion or their country.

And why should the truth be concealed on this point? "The country" was to Lamb precisely what London is to thoroughly country people born and bred,—who, however they may long to see it for the first time, and are lost in a week's empty ad-

miration at its "sights" and wonders,—would literally die of home sickness if compelled to remain long in it. I remember, when wandering once with Lamb among the pleasant scenery about Enfield shortly after his retirement there, I was congratulating him on the change between these walks and his accustomed ones about Islington, Dalston, and the like. But I soon found that I was treading on tender ground, and he declared afterwards, with a vehemence of expression extremely unusual with him, and almost with tears in his eyes, that the most squalid garret in the most confined and noisome purlieu of London would be a paradise to him, compared with the fairest dwelling placed in the loveliest scenery of "the country." "I *hate* the country!" he exclaimed, in a tone and with an emphasis which showed not only that the feeling came from the bottom of his soul, but that it was working ungentle and sinister results there, that he was himself almost alarmed at. The fact is that, away from London, Lamb's spirits seemed to shrink and retire inwards, and his body to fade and wither like a

plant in an uncongenial soil. The whole of what he felt to be the truly vital years of his existence had been passed in London; almost every pleasant association connected with the growth, development, and exercise of his intellectual being belonged to some metropolitan locality; every agreeable recollection of his social intercourse with his most valued friends arose out of some London scene or incident. He was born in London; the whole even of his school life was passed in London;* he earned his living in London,—performing there, for thirty years, that to him pleasantly monotonous drudgery which gave him his ultimate independence;† in London he won that fame which, however little store he might seem to set by it, was not without a high and cherished value in his eyes. In short, London was the centre to which every movement of Lamb's mind gravitated—the

* At Christ's Hospital, where he was contemporary with Coleridge, and where their life-long friendship commenced.

† He was a clerk in the India House for that period, but before I knew him had retired on half-pay.

pole to which the needle of his affections and sympathies vibrated—the home to which his heart was tied by innumerable strings of flesh and blood, that could not be broken without lacerating the being of which they formed a part. In Lamb's eye and estimation the close passages and grim quadrangles of the Temple (one of his early dwelling-places) were far more pleasant and healthful than the most fair and flowery spots of

"Auburn, loveliest village of the plain."

To him, the tide of human life that flowed through Fleet Street and Ludgate Hill, was worth all the Wyes and Yarrows in the universe; there were, to his thinking, no "Green Lanes" to compare with Fetter Lane or St Bride's; no Garden like Covent Garden; and the singing of all the feathered tribes of the air, "grated harsh discord" in his ear, attuned as it was only to the drone or squall of the London ballad-singer, the grinding of the hand-organ, and the nondescript "London cries," set to their cart-wheel accompaniments.

And yet, when Lamb lived in the country,

he used to spend the whole of the fore part of his days, winter and summer alike, in long walks and wanderings—not in search of any specific scenes or objects of interest or curiosity, but merely for the sake of walking—its movement and action being congenial to the somewhat torpid and sluggish character of his temperament; for, when sitting still alone, his thoughts were apt to brood and hover, in an uneasy slumberousness, over dangerous and intractable questions, on which his strong common sense told him there was no satisfaction to be gained, but from which his searching spirit could not detach itself.

There was another inducement to these long walks. In whatever direction they lay, Lamb always saw at the end of them the pleasant vision of a foaming pot of ale or porter, which was always liked the better for being quaffed

"In the worst inn's worst room."

The reader, who has accompanied me thus far in my personal recollections of Charles Lamb, will not object to my dwelling for a few moments on a habit of his latter years,

which is one of those on which a man's *friends* are apt, without sufficient reason, to interdict themselves from speaking; thus abandoning the topic to the tender mercies of his enemies.

The truth is, that as "to the pure, all is pure," so to the wise and good, all is wise and good. Now, there never was a wiser and better man than Charles Lamb, and the habit to which I am about to refer more definitely than in the above passage, was one of the wisest to which he addicted himself; and if it now and then lapsed into folly, what is the merely human wisdom which does not sometimes do the like?

When Lamb was about to accompany a parting guest half a mile, or half a dozen miles on his way to town (which was his almost constant practice), you could always see that his sister had rather he stayed at home; and her last salutation was apt to be—"Now, Charles, you're not going to take any ale?" "No, no," was his more than half-impatient reply. Now, this simple question, and its simple reply, form the text on which I ask leave to preach my little

homily on the imputed sin of an extra glass of gin and water.

The truth, then, is, that Lamb's excellent sister, in her over-anxious and affectionate care in regard to what she looked at too exclusively as a question of *bodily* health, endeavoured latterly to restrict her brother too much in the use—for to the abuse he was never addicted—of those artificial stimuli which were to a certain extent indispensable to the healthy tone of his mental condition. To keep him from the chance of being ill, she often kept him from the certainty of being well and happy—not to mention the keeping others from partaking in the inestimable results of that health and happiness. I have listened delightedly to the intellectual Table Talk of a large proportion of the most distinguished conversers of the day, and have ever found it, as a rule, to be infinitely more deeply imbued with wisdom, and the virtues which spring from wisdom, and infinitely more capable of impressing and generating these, than the *written* words of the same teachers. But I have no recollection of any such colloquies that have left such delightful

and instructive impressions on my mind as those which have taken place between the first and the last glass of gin and water, after a rump-steak or a pork-chop supper in the simple little domicile of Charles Lamb and his sister at Enfield Chace. And it must not be overlooked that the afore-named gin and water played no insignificant part in those repasts. True, it *created* nothing. But it was the talisman that not only unlocked the poor casket in which the rich thoughts of Charles Lamb were shut up, but set in motion that machinery in the absence of which they would have lain like gems in the mountain, or gold in the mine.

No really good converser, who duly appreciates the use and virtue of that noble faculty, ever talks for the pleasure of talking, or in the absence of some external stimulus to the act. He talks wisely and eloquently only because he thinks and feels wisely and eloquently, and he is always fonder of listening than of talking. He talks chiefly that he may listen, not listens merely that he may talk.

Now Charles Lamb, who, when present

was always the centre from which flowed and to which tended the stream of the talk, was literally tongue-tied till some slight artificial stimulus let loose the sluggish member; and his profound and subtle spirit itself seemed to wear chains till the same external agency set it at liberty. Indeed, compared with what it really contained, his mind remained a sealed book to the last, as regards the world in general. I mean that his writings, rich and beautiful as they are, were but mere spillings, or forced overflowings, from the hidden fountains of his mind and heart. It was a task of almost insuperable difficulty and trouble to him to write; for he had no desire for literary fame, no affected anxiety to make his fellow-creatures wiser or better than he found them, and no fancied mission to do so; nor had he any pecuniary necessities pressing him on to the labour. So that I do not believe he would ever have written at all but for that salutary "pressure from *within*," which answered to the divine afflatus of the oracles of old, and *would* have vent in speech or written words. His thoughts were like the inspirations of the true poet, which must

be expressed by visible symbols or audible sounds, or they drive their recipient mad. What was "the Reading Public" to Charles Lamb? He did not care a pinch out of his dear sister's snuff-box whether they were supplied to repletion with "food convenient for them," or left to starve themselves into mental health for the want of it. He knew that, in any case, what he had to offer would be "caviare" to them.

But it was a very different case with regard to the little world of friends and intimates that his social and intellectual qualities had gathered about him. When with them, it was always as pleasant and easy for him to talk as it was to listen; but never more so; for the truth is, he did not care much even about *them*, so far as related to any pressing desire or necessity for their admiration or appreciation of his mental parts or acquirements: so that latterly nothing enabled or rather induced him to talk at all but that artificial stimulus which for a time restored to him his youth, and chased away that spirit of indifference which had pervaded the whole of his moral being during the last ten years of his life.

In the country, too, this mental apathy and indifference gathered double weight and strength by the absence of any of those more legitimate means of resisting them, which were always at hand in London: for Lamb was not, as I have hinted, among those fortunate persons who

> "Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything:"

on the contrary, he saw about him on every side an infinite deal of bad, and no means of turning it to good; while the good that there really is, he saw perpetually overlooked, or turned to bad, by those who should apply and administer it.

The reader must not for a moment suppose, from anything I have now said, that Charles Lamb was in the habit of indulging in that "inordinate cup" which is so justly said to be "unblest, and its ingredient a devil." My very object and excuse in alluding to the subject has been to show that precisely the reverse was the case—that the cup in which *he* indulged was a blessing one, no less to himself than to others, and that for both parties "its ingredient" was an angel.

VI.

TER OF CHARLES LAMB TO P. G. PATMORE.—ELIA T A FUNERAL.— UNPUBLISHED "SPECIMENS" OF HIS CRITICAL POWERS.

Hazlitt has somewhere said of Charles Lamb speculatively, that he was a man who would laugh at a funeral and cry at a wedding. How far the first branch of the proposition was true may be seen by the following exquisite effusion:—

Charles Lamb to P. G. Patmore.

"Dear P.—I am so poorly! I have been to a funeral, where I made a pun, to the consternation of the rest of the mourners. And we had wine. I can't describe to you the howl which the widow set up at proper intervals. Dash could, for it was not unlike what he makes.

"The letter I sent you was one directed to the care of E. White, India House, for Mrs. Hazlitt. *Which* Mrs. Hazlitt I don't yet know, but A. has taken it to France on

speculation. Really it is embarrassing. There is Mrs. present H., Mrs. late H., and Mrs. John H., and to which of the three Mrs. Wiggins's it appertains I don't know. I wanted to open it, but it's transportation.

"I am sorry you are plagued about your book. I would strongly recommend you to take for one story Massinger's 'Old Law.' It is exquisite. I can think of no other.

"Dash is frightful this morning. He whines and stands up on his hind legs. He misses Beckey, who is gone to town. I took him to Barnet the other day, and he couldn't eat his victuals after it. Pray God his intellects be not slipping.

"Mary is gone out for some soles. I suppose it's no use to ask you to come and partake of 'em; else there's a steam-vessel.

"I am doing a tragi-comedy in two acts, and have got on tolerably; but it will be refused, or worse. I never had luck with anything my name was put to.

"Oh, I am so poorly! I *waked* it at my cousin's the bookbinder's, who is now with God; or if he is not, it's no fault of mine.

"We hope the frank wines do not disagree

with Mrs. Patmore. By the way, I like her.

"Did you ever taste frogs? Get them, if you can. They are like little Lilliput rabbits, only a thought nicer.

"Christ, how sick I am!—not of the world, but of the widow's shrub. She's sworn under £6000, but I think she perjured herself. She howls in E *la*, and I comfort her in B flat. You understand music?

"If you haven't got Massinger, you have nothing to do but go to the first bibliothèque you can light upon at Boulogne, and ask for it (Gifford's Edition), and if they haven't got it, you can have "Athalie," par Monsieur Racine, and make the best of it. But that 'Old Law' 's delicious.*

"'No shrimps!' (That's in answer to

* This refers to a series of tales that I was writing, (since published under the title of, "Chatsworth, or the Romance of a Week,") for the subject of one of which he had recommended me to take "The Old Law." As Lamb's critical faculties (as displayed in the celebrated "specimens" which created an era in the dramatic taste of England) were not surpassed by those of any writer of his day, the reader may like to see a few "specimens" of some notes which Lamb took the pains to make on two of the tales that were

Mary's question about how the soles are to be done.)

"I am uncertain where this *wandering*

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shown to him. I give these the rather that there is occasionally blended with their critical nicety of tact, a drollery that is very characteristic of the writer. I shall leave these notes and verbal criticisms to speak for themselves, after merely explaining that they are written on separate bits of paper, each note having a numerical reference to that page of the MS. in which occurs the passage commented on.

"Besides the words 'riant' and 'Euphrosyne,' the sentence is senseless. 'A sweet sadness' capable of inspiring 'a more *grave joy*'—than what?—than demonstrations of *mirth?* Odd if it had not been. I had once a *wry aunt*, which may make me dislike the phrase.

"'Pleasurable:'—no word is good that is awkward to spell. (Query.) Welcome or Joyous.

"'*Steady self-possession* rather than *undaunted courage*,' &c. The two things are not opposed enough. You mean, rather than rash fire of valor in action."

"'Looking like a heifer,' I fear wont do in prose. (Qy.) 'Like to some spotless heifer,'—or, 'that you might have compared her to some spotless heifer,' &c. —or, 'Like to some sacrificial heifer of old.' I should prefer, 'garlanded with flowers as for a sacrifice'—and cut the cow altogether."

"(Say) 'Like the muttering of some strange spell,' —omitting the demon,—they are *subject* to spells, they don't use them."

"'*Feud*' here (and before and after) is wrong. (Say) old malice, or, difference. *Feud* is of clans. It

letter may reach you. What you mean by Poste Restante, God knows. Do you mean I must pay the postage? So I do to Dover.

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might be applied to family quarrels, but is quite improper to individual fallings out."

"'Apathetic.' Vile word.

"'Mechanically,' faugh!—insensibly—involuntarily—in-anything-ly but mechanically."

"Calianax's character should be somewhere briefly *drawn*, not left to be dramatically inferred."

"'Surprised and almost vexed while it troubled her.' (awkward.) Better, 'in a way that while it deeply troubled her, could not but surprise and vex her to think it should be a source of trouble at all."

"'Reaction' is vile slang. 'Physical'—vile word."

"Decidedly, Dorigen should simply propose to him to remove the rocks as *ugly* or *dangerous*, not as affecting her with fears for her husband. The idea of her husband should be excluded from a promise which is meant to be *frank* upon impossible conditions. She cannot promise in one breath infidelity to him, and make the conditions a good to him. Her reason for hating the rocks is good, but not to be expressed here."

"Insert after 'to whatever consequences it might lead,'—'Neither had Arviragus been disposed to interpose a husband's authority to prevent the execution of this rash vow, was he unmindful of that older and more solemn vow which, in the young days of their marriage, he had imposed upon himself, in no instance to control the settled purpose or determination of his wedded wife;—so that by the chains of a double contract he seemed bound to abide by her decision in this instance, whatever it might be.'"

"We had a merry passage with the widow at the Commons. She was howling—part howling and part giving directions to the proctor—when crash! down went my sister through a crazy chair, and made the clerks grin, and I grinned, and the widow tittered *—and then I knew that she was not inconsolable.* Mary was more frightened than hurt.

"She'd make a good match for anybody (by she, I mean the widow.)

> "'If he bring but a *relict* away
> He is happy, nor heard to complain.'
> SHENSTONE.

"Procter has got a wen growing out at the nape of his neck, which his wife wants him to have cut off; but I think it rather an agreeable excrescence—like his poetry—redundant. Hone has hanged himself for debt. Godwin was taken up for picking pockets. Beckey takes to bad courses. Her father was blown up in a steam machine. The coroner found it Insanity. I should not like him to sit on my letter.*

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* The reader need scarcely be told that all the above items of home news are pure fiction.

"Do you observe my direction? Is it Gallic?—Classical?*

"Do try and get some frogs. You must ask for 'grenouilles' (green-eels). They don't understand 'frogs,' though it's a common phrase with us.

"If you go through Bulloign (Boulogne) enquire if old Godfrey is living, and how he got home from the Crusades. He must be a very old man now.

"If there is anything new in politics or literature in France, keep it till I see you again, for I'm in no hurry. Chatty-Briant (Chateaubriand) is well, I hope.

"I think I have no more news; only give both our loves ('all three,' says Dash) to Mrs. Patmore, and bid her get quite well, as I am at present, bating qualms, and the grief incident to losing a valuable relation.

"Londres, July 19, 1827. "C. L."

If I give this imcomparable letter in all its disjointed integrity, with its enormous jokes

* By this it should seem that the direction was written before the letter, for the passage is not interlined.

in the shape of pretended domestic news, about Procter, Hone, Godwin, Beckey, &c.; its inimitable *tableau vivant* of the "merry passage with the widow at the Commons;" its "and then I knew that she was not inconsolable," which cannot be paralleled out of Shakespeare; its startling dramatic interpolations, "No shrimps!" and "All three, says Dash;" its sick qualms, curable only by puns; its deliberate incoherencies; its hypothetical invitation to dinner, (I was at Paris at the time);—if I venture to give all these in their naked innocence, it is because I do not dare to tamper, even to the amount of a single word, with an epistolary gem that is worth the best volume of Horace Walpole's, and half the "Elegant Extracts" from Pope and Atterbury to boot.

VII.

HIS SINGULAR INTELLECTUAL CHARACTER.—THE TERRIBLE CATASTROPHE OF HIS EARLY LIFE.—HIS HEROIC CONDUCT UNDER IT.

From much that I have said of Charles Lamb it will have been gathered that he was little qualified, either by temperament or habits, to live in what is called "the world." It may seem paradoxical to say so, but he was quite as little qualified to live out of it. In some sort wedded both to solitude and to society, so far from being able to make himself "happy with either," each was equally incapable of filling and satisfying his affections. The truth is that, deep and yet gentle as those affections were, his daily life gave token that in their early development they had received a sinister bias which never afterwards quitted them—perchance a blow which struck them from the just centre on which they seemed to have been originally destined

to revolve, in a circle of the most perfect beauty and harmony.*

Those of Lamb's friends who felt a real and deep interest in his intellectual character, and its results on his personal happiness, must, I think, have seen this influence at work in almost every movement of his mind and heart, as these developed themselves in his ordinary life and conversation; for in his published writings the evidences I allude to do not appear, at least in any distinct and tangible form. There, in short, and there only, was Charles Lamb his own man—his early, natural, original self; as indeed is almost always the case with those men who possess that peculiar idiosyncrasy which is indicated by the term *genius*.

It would be a task as difficult as delicate, to adduce detailed evidence of the peculiar condition of mind and heart, in Charles Lamb, to which I have just alluded; but I think that some, at least, of his intimates, will call to mind such evidence, especially in connexion with the last few years of his life. I appeal to those intimates whether they ever

* See note to p. 73.

saw Lamb wholly at his ease for half an hour together—wholly free from that restlessness which is incompatible with mental tranquillity; whether they ever saw him wrapt in that deep and calm *repose*, in the absence of which there can be no actual, soul-felt satisfaction.

If, indeed, they have seen him alone in his book room—he unknowing of their presence—hanging in rapt sympathy over the tattered pages of one of his beloved old folios, perchance, quietly disentangling some ineffable mystery in "Heywood's Hierarchy of Angels," or listening with his mind's ear to the solemn music breathing from the funereal organ of Sir Thomas Browne's Urn-burial—they may have seen him in a condition of mind analogous to that self-centred repose which is the soul of human happiness, but is not identical with it.

It is not the less true that Lamb was, for the moment, delighted at the advent of an unlooked-for friend, even though he was thereby interrupted in the midst of one of these beatific communings. But they must have read his character ill, or with little in-

terest, who did not perceive that, after the pleasant excitement of the moment was over, he became restless, uneasy, and "busied about many things"—about anything, rather than the settling down quietly into a condition of mind or temper, even analogous to that from which the new arrival had irretrievably roused him, for that day at least. Feeling the unseasonable disturbance *as* such, yet not for a moment admitting it to be such, even to himself, he became *over*-anxious to show you how welcome you were,—doing half-a-dozen things in a breath, to prove the feeling, —every one of which, if read aright, proved something very like the reverse. If it happened to be about dinner-time, he would go into the kitchen to see if it was ready, or put on his hat and go out to order an additional supply of porter, or open a bottle of wine and pour some out,—taking a glass himself to set you the example, as he innocently imagined,—but, in reality, to fortify himself for the task of hospitality that you had imposed upon him; anything, in fact, but sit quietly down by the fire, and enjoy your company, or let you enjoy his. And if

you happened to arrive when dinner or tea was over, he was perfectly fidgety, and almost cross, till you were fairly seated at the meal which he and his excellent sister insisted on providing for you, whether you would or not.

It is true that, by the time all these preliminaries were over, he had recovered his ease, and was really glad to see you; and if you had come to stay the night, when the shutters were shut, and the candles came, and you were comfortably seated round the fire, he was evidently pleased and bettered by the occasion thus afforded for a dish of cosey table-talk. But not the less true is it that every knock at the door sent a pang to his heart; and this without any distinction of persons: whoever it might be, he equally welcomed and wished them away; and all for the same reason—namely, that they called him from the company of his own thoughts, or those still better communings with the thoughts of his dead friends, with whom he could hold an intercourse unclogged by any actual bodily presence.

In these respects, Lamb resembled the lover

in Martial's epigram: he could neither live *with* his friends, nor without them. If they stayed away from him long, he was hurt and angry; and when they went to him, he was put out.

I believe these contradictory feelings of Lamb in regard to the visits of his friends, to have been in a great measure the secret of his daily and interminable rambles, which he pursued without aim or object, and certainly without any care about the scenes of external nature they might bring before him; for, as I have said, he was anything but fond of the country for itself, and took no sort of pleasure in any of the pursuits and amusements connected with it. Even a garden he was more than indifferent about. If compelled to walk in one, he could no more have confined himself to the regular *walks* than a bird could, and had it been his own, he would have trampled it all into one plot in a week. The garden attached to the cottage they first took at Enfield Chace was in the condition of a school play-ground—never having been touched by spade or hoe for the two years they occupied the place. In short, if such

a truth may be told of one who was after all a true poet, Lamb was more than indifferent about flowers—he almost disliked them. In the world, as at present constituted, a man like Charles Lamb must hate *something;* and for him (Lamb) to hate a human being, or indeed any sentient being—even an adder or a toad—was impossible to his nature. Is it, then, speculating too curiously on his singularly-constituted mind and heart to suppose that he may have gone to the opposite extreme—for he lived in extremes—and hated that which seems made only to be loved, and which all the world fancy they love, or pretend to do, because they can find nothing in them to move their hate—flowers, fields, and the face of external nature?

Before quitting this perhaps too-speculative portion of my Recollections of Charles Lamb, I must remind his earlier and older friends that my knowledge of him extended only over the last nine or ten years of his life: and every lustre that he lived made him in many respects a new man.*

* The greater part of the foregoing pages, and all the above speculative view of a certain phase of Lamb's in-

tellectual character, were written, precisely as they now stand, almost immediately after his death, and in total ignorance of those awful circumstances the disclosure of which gives such a terrible interest to the "Final Memorials" of the late Mr. Justice Talfourd. This disclosure most sadly and strangely confirms my conjectural interpretation of certain features of his character and bearing, which were more or less self-contradictory even to those of his most intimate friends who (like myself) were mercifully kept in ignorance of the events of his early life.

The tragic catastrophe disclosed by these "Final Memorials" is thus described in a brief letter from Charles Lamb himself to Coleridge:—

"Sept. 27, 1796.

"My dearest Friend,—White, or some of my friends, or the public newspapers, by this time may have informed you of the dreadful calamity that has fallen upon our family. * * * My poor, dear, dearest sister, in a fit of insanity, has been the death of her own mother. I was at hand only time enough to snatch the knife out of her grasp. She is at present in a madhouse. * * * My poor father was slightly wounded. * * * I charge you, don't think of coming to see me. Write. I will not see you if you come. God Almighty love you and all of us. C. Lamb."

Lamb's eloquent biographer, at the close of his work, beautifully moralizes, and (in the best sense of the word) "improves" this terrible event as follows:—

"Before bidding them (Charles and Mary Lamb) a lasting adieu, we may be allowed to linger a little longer, and survey their characters by the new and solemn lights which are now, for the first time, fully cast upon them. Except to the few who were acquainted with the tragical occurrences of Lamb's early life, some

of his peculiarities seemed strange—to be forgiven, indeed, to the excellencies of his nature and the delicacy of his genius, but still in themselves as much to be wondered at as deplored. The sweetness of his character, breathed through his writings, was felt even by strangers; but its heroic aspect was unguessed even by many of his friends. Let them now consider it, and ask if the annals of self-sacrifice can show anything in human action and endurance more lovely than its self-devotion exhibits. It was not merely that he saw, through the ensanguined cloud that had fallen upon his family, the unstained excellence of his sister whose madness had caused it; that he was ready to take her to his own house with reverential affection, and cherish her through life; that he gave up for her sake all meaner and more selfish love, and all the hopes which youth blends with the passion which disturbs and ennobles it; not even that he did all this cheerfully, and without pluming himself upon his brotherly nobleness as a virtue, or seeking to repay himself (as many uneasy martyrs do) by small instalments of long repining; but he carried the spirit of the hour in which he first knew and took his course to the last. . . . . Let it also be remembered, that this devotion of the entire nature was not exercised merely in the consciousness of a past tragedy, but during the frequent recurrences of the calamity which caused it, and the constant apprehension of its terrors, and this for a large portion of life in poor lodgings, where the brother and sister were, or fancied they were, 'marked people;' where, from an income incapable of meeting the expense of the sorrow without sedulous privations, he continued to hoard, not for holiday enjoyment or future solace, but to provide for expected distress."

Two of the anecdotes related by Sir T. N. Talfourd,

in connexion with this periodically-recurring calamity, are so touchingly beautiful, that the pain excited by them is merged, almost at the moment of its birth, in the divine pity which is twin-born with it. "The constant impendency of this giant sorrow saddened to the Lambs even their holidays, as the journey which they both regarded as the relief and charm of the year was frequently followed by a seizure; and when they ventured to take it, *a strait-waistcoat, carefully packed by Miss Lamb herself, was their constant companion.*"

"On one occasion Mr. Charles Lloyd met them slowly pacing together a little footpath in Hoxton fields, both weeping bitterly, and found, on joining them, that they were taking their solemn way to the accustomed asylum."

This dreadful catastrophe of Lamb's early life (it happened when he was only twenty-one years of age, his sister being nearly ten years his senior) not merely explains all the seeming anomalies of his character, but, when coupled with his own heroic conduct under its pressure, lets us into the secret of his wonderful perception of the scope and bearing of those scarcely more horrible scenes of some of the old dramatists, which he was the first to appreciate and point out in those celebrated "Specimens," which created an epoch in our critical literature. That, for instance, in the *Broken Heart* of Ford, where Calantha remains calm and impassible under the repeated blows by which she is nevertheless stricken unto death, was scarcely known among living readers, and where known was regarded as forced and extravagant, until Lamb saw and felt that it was true as the death-in-life that it depicted.

VIII.

ODD CORRESPONDENT OF LAMB. — HIS SYMPATHY WITH THE POOR AND VILE. — HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH HAZLITT.

Most literary men of extensive reputation have met with odd and unexpected testimonies of the admiration they have excited in quarters where they would have least looked for it, and which has been set forth in a fashion drolly discordant with their tastes and habits of feeling; and Lamb was not without these testimonies. One of them he related to me as having mightily tickled his sense of the ludicrous. A young gentleman in the country, of a "literary turn,"

> "A clerk foredoomed his father's soul to cross,
> Who penned a stanza when he should engross,"

solicited the favour of Lamb's correspondence and friendship; and as an unequivocal testimonial of his claims to these, he forwarded to the object of his admiration his miniature portrait; the said effigy setting forth a form and feature such as "youthful maidens fancy when they love."

It was excessively amusing to hear Lamb describe his droll embarrassment, on the reception of this naive and original mode of paying court to a man who almost piqued himself on having no eye or taste for personal comeliness, even in women, while anything like coxcombry in a man made him sick; and who yet had so exquisite a sense of what was due to the feelings of others, that when a young lady who was staying at his house, had been making some clothes for the child of a poor gipsy woman in the neighbourhood, whose husband was afterwards convicted of sheep-stealing, would not allow her (the young lady) to quit the village without going to see and take leave of her unhappy protegée,—on the express plea that otherwise the felon's wife might imagine that she had heard of her husband's "misfortune," and was ashamed to go near her. "I have a delicacy for a sheep-stealer," said he.*

* See a letter to Mr. Procter, printed in the "Athenæum" immediately after his death, in which Lamb himself gives an account of this incident; also an exquisite sonnet, embodying the woman's supposed feel-

There are many who duly appreciate, and are ready enough to extol, the beauty and the merits of this delicacy to the personal feelings of others, and a few who can sympathize with it even in extreme cases like the one just cited; but I never knew any one who was capable of uniformly, and at all costs, *practising* it, except Charles Lamb and William Hazlitt,—both of whom extended it to the lowest and vilest of man and woman kind; would give the wall to a beggar if it became a question which of the two should cede it, and if they had visited a convicted felon in his cell, would have been on tenter-hooks all the time, lest anything might drop from them to indicate that they had less consideration for the object of their visit than if he had been the most "respectable" of men.

The name of William Hazlitt reminds me that a writer* of some pleasing "recollections" of Charles Lamb, in the number of the New Monthly Magazine immediately following his death, speaking of Lamb's

ings towards her child on the occasion of its father's conviction.

* Mr. Forster, I believe.

intimacy with Hazlitt, and of the unshrinking manner in which he stood by him, "through good report and through ill report," says,—"He (Lamb) was, we believe, the only one of Hazlitt's early associates who stood beside his grave." He was not merely (as I have said elsewhere) the only one of Hazlitt's "early" associates,—he was the only one of all his associates or friends, early or recent, excepting his own son and the writer of these pages. The fact offers a sorry evidence of the estimation in which purely intellectual endowments are held among us. And the case is not bettered by the circumstance that, to this day, no one of the many who knew him intimately through the whole of his literary life, has taken the pains to rescue his name and character from the load of undeserved obloquy that was cast upon them, during his life-time, by those political enemies and opponents who saw no other way of combatting the "cannonade-reasoning" and the terrible invective he was accustomed to bring to bear against them.*

* In a subsequent portion of these Memorials I have done what I could to supply this deficiency, as

But Hazlitt, to say nothing of his unpopular manners, and his unlucky disposition to "call a knave a knave, and Chartres Chartres," could not abstain from speaking the truth even of his best friends, when they happened to treat him as he felt that only an enemy should be treated; and the man who does this must reckon upon outliving every friend he has in the world, die when he may.

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regards the last twelve years of Hazlitt's life, during which period alone I knew him. Those, however, were by far the most remarkable years of his literary life, and I believe I saw and knew more of him during those years than any other of his friends.

IX.

LAMB AT HOME AND ABROAD.—ANECDOTES OF NORTHCOTE, L.E.L., &c.—EVENING AT LEIGH HUNT'S.—ANECDOTES OF COLERIDGE AND LAMB.

As it is not the aim of this work to exalt or aggrandize the intellectual pretensions of the persons to whom it relates, but only to give true sketches of them as they appeared from the point of view from which the writer looked at them, I shall resort very sparingly to those daily records which I occasionally made, of my personal intercourse with them at set literary or other meetings, where they were more or less *on show*, and consequently never perfectly themselves—any more than a sitter for his portrait is until the artist has talked and enticed him into forgetfulness of the occasion of his visit. What I profess to know and to depict of the persons I treat of was gathered chiefly in that familiar *tête-à-tête* intercourse in which alone men show themselves for what they really are. The startling strangeness of

Lamb's utterances at those social meetings in which he joined, either at his own house or elsewhere, though strikingly characteristic of the turn of thought and tone of feeling which prompted them, were anything but indicative of his personal and intellectual character, except as these were momentarily coloured and modified by the circumstances acting upon them. Still, as these colourings and modifications are part and parcel of the picture he has left on my recollection, the reader may like, and, indeed, may be considered as entitled in Lamb's case, to see a few of those traits and touches which the self-painter was accustomed to throw in when the beloved solitude of his studio was disturbed by the presence of comparative strangers. And to this end I shall copy *verbatim* from a diary which, when made at all, was invariably made on the night of the day to which it refers.

"December 5, 1826.—Spent the evening at Lamb's. When I went in, they (Charles and his sister) were alone, playing at cards together.

"I took up a book on the table—

'Almack's'—and Lamb said—'Ay; that must be *all max* to the lovers of scandal.'

"Speaking of Northcote, he related a story of him, illustrating his love for doing and saying little malicious things. It was at a party at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, where Boswell was present, and they were talking of Malone, and somebody said that Malone seemed to live in Shakespeare, and not to have a feeling or thought connected with anything else; upon which Northcote said—'Then he must have been the meanest of mankind. The man who sets up any other man as a sort of God, and worships him to the exclusion of all other things and thoughts, must be *the meanest of men;*—and everybody,' said Northcote (who was himself the original relator of the story), 'everybody turned and looked at Boswell.'

"We spoke of L. E. L., and Lamb said—'If she belonged to me, I would lock her up and feed her on bread and water till she left off writing poetry. A female poet, or female author of any kind, ranks below an actress, I think.'

"—— was mentioned, and Lamb said

he seemed to him to be a sort of L. E. L. in pantaloons.

" Bernard Barton was mentioned, and Lamb said that he did not write nonsense, at any rate—which all the rest of them did (meaning the Magazine poets of the day). He was dull enough; but not nonsensical. 'He writes English, too,' said Lamb, 'which they do not.'

" H. C. R. came in about half-past eight, and put a stop to all further conversation—keeping all the talk to himself.

" Speaking of some German story, in which a man is made to meet *himself*—he himself having changed forms with some one else—the talk turned on what we should think of ourselves, if we could see ourselves without knowing that it *was* ourselves. R. said that he had all his life felt a sort of horror come over him every time he caught a sight of his own face in the glass; and that he was almost afraid to shave himself for the same reason. He said that he often wondered how anybody could sustain an intimacy with, much less feel a friendship for, a man with such a face. Lamb said—'I hope you have

mercy on the barbers, and always shave yourself.'

"Speaking of names, Lamb said—'John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster,' was the grandest name in the world. On this R. spoke of a Spanish pamphlet he had lately met with, describing the Reformation, in which all the English names were changed to Spanish ones, and the fine effect it had. It began by relating that a great prince named *Don Henriquez* (Henry VIII.) was married to a beautiful princess called *La Donna Catalina* (Queen Catherine)—that he was under the influence of a wily priest named *il Cardinal Bolseo* (Wolsey), who advised him to divorce his chaste wife la Donna Catalina, and unite himself to a foul though beautiful witch named *La Donna Anna Volena* (Anna Boleyn). Jane Seymour was called *La Donna Joanna Sumaro*, and her house (at Greenwich) the castle of *Grenuccio*.

"Friday, July 13.—Spent the evening at Leigh Hunt's, with the Lambs, Atherstone, Mrs. Shelley, and the Gliddons. Lamb talked admirably about Dryden and some of the older poets, in particular of Davenant's

Gondibert. Of this Hunt wanted to show that it consisted almost entirely of monosyllables, which give a most heavy and monotonous effect to the versification; and he read some passages to that effect. Lamb would not admit this, and he read an admirable passage in reply, about a Museum of Natural Curiosities in which Man, the pretended Lord of all the other creatures, hung by the wall, dry, like all the rest, and even Woman, the Lord of Man, hung there too—'and *she* dried by him.' The effect of the passage was prodigious. . . .

"He (Lamb) spoke of Dryden as a prodigious person, so far as his wonderful power of versification went, but not a first-rate poet, or even capable of appreciating such—giving instances from his prefaces in proof of this. He spoke of Dryden's prefaces as the finest pieces of *criticism*, nevertheless, that had ever been written, and the better for being contradictory to each other, because not founded on any pretended *rules*.

"Hunt was asking how it was necessary to manage in order to get Coleridge to come and dine. Lamb replied that he believed he (Cole-

ridge) was under a kind of watch and ward—alluding to the watchful care taken of him by the Gilmans, with whom he was then residing. 'Ah,' said H., '*vain* is the watch (Mrs. G.), and *bootless* is the ward' (Mr. G.), who always wore shoes.

"Lamb repeated one of his own enormous puns. He had met Procter, and speaking of his little girl (then an infant), Procter said they had called her Adelaide. 'Ah,' said Lamb, 'a very good name for her—*Addle-head.*'"

The two following anecdotes are so characteristic that, although they reached me at second-hand, and may possibly, therefore, have been printed before, I will not omit them. They were told me by James Smith (of the "Rejected Addresses"), at a dinner at the late Charles Matthews's:—

Lamb and Coleridge were talking together on the incidents of Coleridge's early life, when he was beginning his career in the Church, and Coleridge was describing some of the facts in his *usual* tone, when he paused, and said: "Pray, Mr. Lamb, did you ever

hear me preach?" "Damme," said Lamb, "I never heard you do anything else."

The other anecdote was of a lady—a sort of social Mrs. Fry—who had been for some time *lecturing* Lamb on his irregularities. At last, she said: "But, really, Mr. Lamb, I'm afraid all that I'm saying has very little effect on you. I'm afraid, from your manner of attending to it, that it will not do you much good." "No, ma'am," said Lamb, "I don't think it will. But as all that you have been saying has gone in at *this* ear (the one next her) and out at the other, I dare say it will do this gentleman a great deal of good," turning to a stranger who stood on the other side of him.

X.

CHARLES LAMB AND THE LORD MAYOR.—LAMB, HAZLITT, AND SOUTHEY.—LAMB AND THE AUTHOR OF "TREMAINE."—LAMB'S DEATH.

In glancing through the foregoing "Recollections" of Charles Lamb, it seems probable that they may be deemed liable to the objection of not being sufficiently specific—of not dealing enough with facts—of expressing rather what the writer *thought* and *felt* of Lamb than what he *knew*. Should this complaint be made, it will doubtless be a valid one for those who make it; but it is one against which I cannot defend myself, because it points at the precise object, not only of *these* Recollections, but of all the others of which the work consists. In fact, I did not go to Charles Lamb's house with a note-book in my pocket, ready to slip aside at every opportunity, and record his "good things" for the benefit of the absent, or the amusement of those who, had they been present, would have disputed his wit because it

was not dressed in the received mode, and yawned over (if they had not felt scandalized at) his wisdom, because it was dictated by the heart rather than the head. Moreover, Lamb was anything but what is understood by "a wit" and a *diseur de mots*, in the ordinary and "company" sense of the phrase, —as the respectable Lord Mayor who invited him to the City feast of Lord Mayor's-day in that capacity would have found to his cost, had Lamb, in that spirit of contradiction which sometimes beset him, accepted the invitation. Though for the mere sitters-by it would have been capital fun to see him mystifying my Lord Mayor, scandalizing my Lady Mayoress, confounding the sheriffs, and putting the whole Court of Aldermen and their wives into a fever of mingled wonder and indignation, at the unseemly revival of an exploded barbarism; for they would doubtless have mistaken our incomparable *Elia* for the Lord Mayor's Fool.* The

* I am supposing that Lamb did *not* accept this tribute offered to his literary fame; but he may have done so for anything I know to the contrary. What I am sure of is, that if he had gone, he would have

Boswells of the literary world are excellent and admirable persons in their way—that is, when they have Doctor Johnson to deal with. But Lamb was, of all men that ever lived, the least of a Doctor Johnson; and Heaven preserve us from a Boswell in his case!—for he would infallibly dissipate the charm and the fragrance that at present encircle the personal memory of Lamb in the minds of his friends, and which, if not so disturbed, may descend with him to that posterity which his name and writings will surely reach.

As my opening Recollections of Charles Lamb have necessarily connected themselves with the name of William Hazlitt, I shall, perhaps, not be improperly departing from the spirit of my theme if I allow my closing remarks to again couple them together. And I do so the rather that my impulse to the act involves in its explanation certain cha-

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taken care to remunerate his inviter as well as himself in a manner and to an effect something like that which I have supposed in the text. The story of the invitation I find in Hazlitt's notice of him in "The Spirit of the Age."

racteristic features in the minds of both these remarkable men.

The truth is, that though Lamb and Hazlitt were strangely different from each other in many features of their minds, they were singularly alike in many others—more so, perhaps, than any other two men of their day. There was a general sympathy between them, which served to melt away, and as it were fuse together, and bring into something like a friendly unison and correspondence, those differences themselves,—till they almost took the character of meeting-points, which brought the two extremes together, when perhaps nothing else could.

In confirmation of this seemingly fanciful theory, I would refer to two facts only, as almost demonstrative of it:—I allude first to that magnanimous letter of Charles Lamb's to Southey, on the latter paying him some public compliment which could only be accepted, as it was only offered, at the cost of some imputation on Hazlitt's character and pursuits. Lamb, on that occasion, flung back to Southey, with a beautiful indignation almost bordering on contempt, and in a tone

of but half-suppressed bitterness which I do not believe he ever exhibited on any other occasion, a testimony to his talents and character which he could not have merited, had the qualifying insinuation, or regret, or whatever it might be called that accompanied it, *also* been deserved. If I remember the circumstances rightly (for I have no means at hand of referring to the record of them on either side), the gist of Southey's double offence was a mingled remonstrance and lamentation at the melancholy fact, that *such a man as Lamb* should consort with *such a man as Hazlitt!* As if any two men that ever lived were more exquisitely constituted and qualified to appreciate and admire the large balance of good over evil that existed in each, and to explain, account for, and excuse the ill, than those two men! Lamb never did a more noble or beautiful or characteristic thing than the writing of that memorable letter; and Hazlitt never experienced a higher or purer intellectual pleasure than in reading it: and though at the period of its publication Hazlitt had for a long time absented himself from Lamb's house and so-

ciety, on account of some strange and gratuitous crotchet of his brain, respecting some imagined offence on the part of Lamb or of himself (for in these cases it was impossible to tell which)—the letter instantly brought them together again; and there was no division of their friendship till Hazlitt's death, fifteen years afterwards.

The other proof I would offer of the natural sympathy between Lamb and Hazlitt, of which I have spoken, is to be found in the fact, that of all the associates of Hazlitt's early days —indeed of his whole literary and social life— the only one, except his son and myself, who followed him to his grave was Charles Lamb.

But, perhaps, those readers who are unacquainted with the literary table-talk of the last twenty years, or have become acquainted with it through a discolouring and distorting medium, may imagine that there was some good and sufficient reason for the double-edged insult of Southey, and the seeming desertion of Hazlitt by his early friends and associates.

If any reader of this page has imbibed such a notion, I call upon him, in the name

of our common nature, and of that sense of justice which is its fairest and noblest feature, to disabuse himself of the unworthy and utterly unfounded impression. And that he is bound in truth and honesty to do so, I appeal to every individual who really knew Hazlitt during the last fifteen years of his life. That Hazlitt had great and crying faults, nobody intimately acquainted with him will deny. But they were faults which hurt himself alone, and were, moreover, inextricably linked with the finer qualities of his nature. The only one of those faults which brought upon him the obloquy to which the peace and comfort of his life were sacrificed, was the result of a virtue which nine-tenths of the world (his maligners included) have the wit to divest themselves of:—what he thought and felt about other people, whether friends or foes, *that* he spoke or wrote,—careless of the consequences to himself, and sparing himself as little as he spared any one else. Moreover, if a man smote him on one cheek, he did not meekly turn the other, and crave for it the same process; nor could he ever persuade himself

to carry away the affront quietly, merely because it might consist with his worldly interest to do so. If he was hated and feared more than any other living man, it was because he saw more deeply than any other man into the legitimate objects of hatred, and was, by habit as well as temper, not amenable to those convenient restraints and mental reservations which custom has imposed, in order to guard against the social consequences of such untoward discoveries. Iago says it was the virtue of the Venetian dames of his day, "not to leave undone, but to keep unknown." It was Hazlitt's virtue —or vice, if you please—not merely "to spy into abuses" (for that we can all of us do), but to feel a sort of moral necessity for dragging them into the light, when he had found them. He could neither conceal nor palliate a single fault or weakness of his own. Was it likely, then, that he would be at the trouble of throwing a veil over those of other people—especially when the only passion of his soul was a love of Truth!

Charles Lamb knew and appreciated these qualities of Hazlitt's mind more truly and

entirely than any one else, because he found the types of them in his own; the only but signal difference being, that he (Lamb), while he saw the truth with an intellectual vision as clear as that of Hazlitt, was, by the gentleness and moral sweetness of his nature, not merely deterred from exposing it to those who might have overlooked it, but was impelled to transform or translate it into symbols of its most striking opposite. Like the "sweet Ophelia," he "turned to favour and to prettiness" all the moral evil and deformity that presented itself to his observation. He could not, or would not, see ugliness anywhere,—except as a sort of beauty-spot upon the face of beauty; but beauty he could see everywhere, and nowhere shining so brightly as when in connexion with what others called ugliness.

In a subsequent portion of these volumes —that devoted to the late accomplished author of "Tremaine," "De Vere," &c.,—I have referred in detail to the singular fact, that no part of the family of either Lamb himself or of Mr. Plumer Ward seem to have

been aware that the beautiful Elizabethan mansion and splendid domain of Gilston Park, which passed into the possession of Mr. Ward, on his marriage with the relict of "the last of the Plumers" (in 1828), is the identical place so celebrated by Lamb in his exquisite Eliaism entitled "Blakesmoor in H——shire," as the almost life-long residence of his maternal grandmother, the respected housekeeper of the Plumers, and the scene where the happiest days of Lamb's childhood were spent. This interesting fact, which confers a twofold classicality on Gilston, was certainly not known to Mr. Plumer Ward himself, and is, I believe, now for the first time disclosed to the world.

There is something inexpressibly shocking in first hearing of a dear friend's death through the medium of a public newspaper, at a time, perhaps, when you believe him to be in perfect health, and are on the point of paying him a too long delayed visit. Such was my case in respect to Charles Lamb. Still more painful was the case of a lady, formerly a distinguished ornament of the

English stage, to whom Lamb was attached by the double tie of admiration and friendship.* Several days after Lamb's death, she was conversing of him with a mutual friend, who, taking for granted her knowledge of Lamb's death, abruptly referred to some circumstance connected with the event, which for the first time made her acquainted with it.

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* Miss Kelly.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

I.

HIS SOCIAL HABITS AND POLITICAL TENDENCIES.—HIS EDITORSHIP OF THE "NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE."

My first personal introduction to Campbell took place in 1830, at the house of a person with whom, by one of those temporary caprices to which, in his latter years, he so habitually yielded, Campbell had contracted an intimacy as little suitable, it might have been supposed, to his refined literary tastes and fastidious personal habits, as it certainly was to the general tone of his intellectual character; for the person to whom I refer, though possessing considerable talents and extensive influence in connexion with the newspaper press, was a man of coarse mind, and of almost ostentatiously profligate personal habits.

Not but there were features in Campbell's mind and character capable of accounting for this temporary intimacy. In the first

place, it must be admitted that, notwithstanding the excessive fastidiousness of his taste and habits in all matters connected with his position and reputation as the first of living poets (for such at that time he was considered), Campbell partook of that propensity to which another kind of Kings are said to be addicted—that of a lurking fondness for "low company;" not "low" in this case, in the ordinary sense of the term, as implying persons of low condition and mean mental endowments, but as indicating that freedom from conventional restraints which always springs from a low tone of moral sentiment, when accompanied by an open and bold-faced repudiation of those principles of personal conduct which form the basis of all cultivated society. And Campbell's mind had a strong tendency to throw off the restraints in question, without the strength of will to do so, even if his high tone of moral feeling had not stood in the way of the step—which it certainly would have done.

The person at whose house I met Campbell, was also a furious republican; and it is probable that the apparent and I believe real

sincerity of his political views and opinions, and the daring and uncompromising way in which he advocated them, both with his pen and tongue, went far to gain for him the political sympathy of Campbell—the only sympathy to which he ever frankly yielded; if, indeed, it was not the only one that he ever strongly felt. Campbell was, in fact, a thorough republican at heart; and not the less so for many of his other qualities, both personal and intellectual, being more or less moulded and coloured by the aristocratic principle, and some of them being the very quintessence of that principle.

There was another attraction in this quarter, which, as it points at a characteristic feature in Campbell's idiosyncrasy, I may venture to refer to, as having exercised no little influence in making the house in question the scene of his frequent visits, when (as during his later years) attractions of a more intellectual character had somewhat loosened their hold upon him. The worthy host was the father of "*two* fair daughters;" one a piquante and sparkling brunette, with black eyes and raven hair, a commanding figure, and endowed with the

full complement of flirtation-power proper to her complexion; the other, a tender, delicate, and shrinking blonde, whose winning softness of look, and pensive repose of manner, aided by melting blue eyes and golden hair, contrasted (almost to a pitch of strangeness) with the wild and vivacious character of her brilliant and bewitching sister.

This united presence gave a zest to the early part of Campbell's evenings at the house of his friend ———, which heightened by its contrast, the frank and cordial, but coarse joviality and good-fellowship of their close: for there was a redeeming bonhommie about the host, and a

"Total, glorious want of vile hypocrisy,"

that in some degree glossed over the open and even ostentatious profligacy of his opinions, and the habits of life which grew out of them.

There was still another reason which took Campbell to the house of this gentleman at the time I am speaking of, which (as it breaks no "confidences") must not be excluded from Recollections, one object of which is to fur-

nish materials for the private and personal history of the literature of our time, and for correcting some of the errors and supplying the oversights of that history. There is a work in two volumes octavo, entitled "Life of Mrs. Siddons," by T. Campbell, Esq.," and another in the like form entitled " Life of Sir Thomas Lawrence, by T. Campbell, Esq.," both of which productions, if I am not greatly misinformed (and my authority was the party better than any one else but Campbell himself acquainted with the facts), were entirely prepared and composed by the gentleman above alluded to—who was an extremely rapid and off-hand writer, and was much employed by " popular" publishers when called upon at a pinch to supply the cravings of the literary market, on any particular topic of the moment, before its more legitimate resources could be brought to bear. If the party in question was to be believed, the only share the alleged author of the above-named works had in their production was that of " overlooking" the MS., " looking over" the proof sheets, and permitting his name to stand rubric in the title-page.

The uninitiated reader must not suppose that I am disclosing any private secrets in this case. One of the modes in which Campbell himself reconciled (both to himself and others) this necessity of his literary and social position, was by making no mystery of the case, or caring that others should do so. "So far as the reading public is concerned," he argued, "all that my name does to these works is, to stand sponsor for their facts, dates, and so forth; and for those I think I can safely depend on ———. For the rest, I am too poor to stand upon the critical niceties of literary casuistry. Besides, those who are fools enough to suppose that I *could* write such loose, disjointed, shambling stuff, as those books are for the most part composed of, are not worth caring about. And the rest of the world will learn the truth, somehow or other, soon enough for the safety of my *poetical* reputation, which is the only one I ever aimed at."

It is with a loving eye to that reputation, and a sincere belief that Campbell himself would have thanked anybody who had made

the disclosure thus publicly, even during his lifetime, that I allow it to form part of these personal records of the literary history of the 19th century.

This seems the proper place for me to notice the exactly similar case of his (nominal) editorship of the "New Monthly Magazine." When a proposition was made to him through a friend, some years before, to undertake that office, he must have felt, and, indeed, I believe, he openly declared, that he was the last person in the world to be the conductor of what aimed at being a "popular" literary miscellany. In temperament indolent, capricious, and uncertain, yet hasty, sensitive, wilful, and obstinate in giving his will its way; his habits of composition slow to a degree of painfulness; his literary taste refined, even to fastidiousness; and, above all, his personal position as the friend and associate of nearly all the distinguished littérateurs of the day, and his almost morbid sensitiveness on the point of giving pain, or even displeasure, to any of them;—Campbell was, and knew himself to be, the ideal of what the

proffered office required its occupant *not* to be.

On the other hand, he knew the money value of his name in the literary market, and was too shrewd to overlook the fact that *that* was the secret of the proprietor's application to him. Moreover, he could not fail to know that his literary position would enable him to do great good to the magazine, in the way of attracting or procuring contributors whom no mere pecuniary considerations could attach to such a work.

Finally, what was he to do? In this land of gold-worshippers, where money is "the be-all and the end-all," not only of a man's social position, but of his personal estimation, Campbell found himself with an extremely small fixed income, and wholly incapable of materially adding to it by any legitimate literary employment to which his habits would permit him to apply himself. He made no scruple, therefore, of accepting the liberal offer that was made to him by the proprietor (of, I believe, 600*l.* a year) for editorship and his own contributions, leaving

entirely to Campbell himself the number and amount of the latter.

Whether or not Campbell, at the moment of his accepting the editorship of the "New Monthly Magazine," had formed any specific views or notions as to the duties that were expected or required of him, or that he was capable of rendering, is difficult to conjecture. Equally problematical is it whether the proprietor, in making the proposition, had looked at Campbell in any other light than as the possessor of at once the most extensive and the most unquestioned reputation of any literary man of the day. Certain it is, however, that the first two months of the experiment demonstrated to both parties the entire unfitness of the poet for the anything but poetical office he had undertaken. Luckily, the same brief period had also satisfied both parties, by the unequalled success of the experiment in a business point of view, that the bargain was, in that respect, a fair one; and as the proprietor had taken the precaution of providing, in case of accidents, an active and industrious *working* editor (in the

person of Mr. Cyrus Redding), the arrangement continued for ten years, to the mutual satisfaction and discontent of both parties; the public, in the meantime, caring nothing about the matter, beyond the obtaining (as they unquestionably did) a better magazine for their money than had ever before been produced.

II.

ANECDOTES OF CAMPBELL'S EDITORSHIP OF THE NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

I WILL here give two or three illustrative anecdotes of the Campbell Editorship of the New Monthly, arising out of my own anonymous connexion with the Magazine before I became personally acquainted with Campbell. Among my first proffered contributions were the two first numbers of a series of papers, having for their object to illustrate the birth, growth, and gradual development of the passion of Love, by means of brief passages in the (supposed) life of the (supposed) writer; and, in order to go to the root of the matter, and to show that, at one period of our lives at all events, the passion is a purely intellectual one, uninfluenced by feelings of sex, the first story related to two school-boys of nine or ten years of age, one of whom "wasted the sweetness" of his nascent affection on "the desert air" of the other's utter

indifference and disdain. Quite anticipating the possibility of this reminiscence of my school-days being thought too "innocent," not to say too puerile, for a grave Magazine—but little thinking of the objection that *would* be made to it—I accompanied it by the second number of the series, which was a love story quite *selon les règles*, so far as regarded the relations of sex, however unorthodox in other respects.

Here is the reply I received to my communication. The style is quite *regal* in point of form, and, like all the others that I received on similar occasions, it is in the hand-writing of Campbell himself:—

"To the writer of the articles entitled "——— the Editor of the 'New Monthly "Magazine's' compliments. The Editor ad- "mires the writer's talents, and attaches not "the slightest misconception to the nature "of the feelings described in the first "number; but he thinks that many persons, "from ignorance, or prejudice, or ill-nature, "may object to the description of the attach- "ment in the first number, and he declines "accepting it. He will, nevertheless, not

" only be happy but grateful for the writer's " permission to publish the second number, " and requests to be favoured with his fur- " ther communications."

Now it is impossible to believe, in the face of this decision, that the writer, who was excessively clear-sighted when he did take the trouble to look into anything, could have read the paper in question—which was simply what I have described it above. The probabilities are, that he never even saw it—that, being glanced at by the worthy proprietor of the Magazine (through whose hands all communications for the Editor passed), and found to relate throughout to two school-boys, it was thought too simple food for the intellectual appetites of grown-up readers, and was therefore, to prevent accidents, intercepted on its way: a species of sifting which I believe everything underwent before it reached the ordeal from which there was no appeal. If I am right in this conjecture, the note I have given was probably the result of a suggestion from the same quarter, born of some vague feeling, generated by that rapid bird's-eye glance which gathers its impres-

sions of a book from a single chapter, and a Magazine article from a single page, and is seldom very far wrong—though now and then, of course, ridiculously so.

About the same time with the above, I commenced another series of papers in the Magazine, entitled "Letters from England." They related to "everything in the world" connected with English life, literature, art, &c., and in order to give a little adventitious novelty and lightness to topics so hacknied, the letters were written ostensibly under the character of a Frenchman. But the disguise was so transparent, and so loosely worn, that it was difficult to conceive—nor was it desired by the wearer—that any one should be otherwise than wilfully deceived by it. Yet here is the editorial Introduction by which the series was ushered to the attention of the readers of the New Monthly.

"These letters are, we understand, the production of a distinguished Frenchman, whose original MS. journal has been obligingly submitted to us by a friend for publication. The editor admits them on account

of the ability which they seem to possess.* For this special consideration he makes, in this one instance, a departure from his general rule, of not inserting any communications bearing the stamp of national prejudice. But he protests against being responsible for a single sentiment they contain."

Now this, like the note preceding it, may safely, I think, be attributed to a suggestion emanating from the *imperium in imperio* which the proprietor of the Magazine himself was wise enough to maintain in his own literary domain. As these letters were intended, after their appearance in the Magazine, to be reprinted as a substantive work,† and it was their publisher's policy that they should (in the first instance, at least), be considered by the public as the *bonâ fide* productions of a foreigner, he probably took the preliminary precaution of "insinuating the

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* Here the secret of non-perusal peeps out. "*Seem* to possess!" So that they may or they may not possess it, for anything he knows about them.

† They were afterwards published by Mr. Colburn, in two volumes, under the title of "Letters on England."

plot into the boxes," through the plastic medium of the responsible editor of the New Monthly, who was the most tractable person in the world, when his own personal feelings did not interfere to make him exactly the reverse. Be this as it may, I must deny having had anything to do with this note, beyond the fact of the letters being, as I have said, ostensibly written under the character of a foreigner.

The third anecdote I shall cite illustrative of Campbell's editorship of the New Monthly relates to a series of papers entitled "The Months,"* which had for their object to note, for present recognition or future recollection, the various facts and incidents of country and of town life which mark the passage of each month respectively. I had accordingly noted, in connexion with the country life of April, the return of the shy and solitary cuckoo—so at least I had called it, and had particularly referred to its extreme rarity as an object of actual sight—a characteristic which Wordsworth has so

* Afterwards republished as a volume by Messrs. Whittaker, under the title of "Mirror of the Months."

beautifully marked when calling it "a wandering *voice*." But *this* Natural History did not accord with the supposed rural experience of the editor, who appended to the passage a note signifying that his contributor was a little at fault on this point, as he (the editor) had frequently "seen whole fields *blue* with cuckoos"—the cuckoo being of a dusky brown colour, and being never by any chance seen two together, except when callow in the nest!

I need scarcely add that these little blunders and oversights are noted merely as among the minor "Curiosities" of our periodical literature, and are by no means intended to call in question or disparage the general merits of a joint management that, taken altogether, raised the New Monthly Magazine to a pitch, not merely of popularity, but of actual desert, which had never before been attained by any work of a similar nature. In fact, the accession of Campbell's name to the New Monthly may be fairly cited as marking an era in our Magazine literature.

Since the foregoing Recollections were

written, I have looked over Mr. Cyrus Redding's Reminiscences, in the New Monthly Magazine, with the view of either confirming or correcting my own impressions derived from an unbroken connexion with the magazine during the whole of Mr. Campbell's (nominal) editorship. The unscrupulous disclosures of Mr. Redding on this subject, in his entertaining Papers, more than confirm all that I have said on it. In one place he speaks of the editorship as "consisting in a negative, not a positive, realization of the duty;" and he adds as follows:—"I do not believe the poet ever read through a single number of the magazine during the whole ten years of his editorship."

III.

MORE ANECDOTES OF HIS EDITORSHIP.—HAZLITT AND NORTHCOTE.—BOSWELL REDIVIVUS.

THOUGH Campbell's nominal editorship of the New Monthly Magazine was pretty nearly a sinecure in respect of the actual work it exacted from him, it was on that very account the source of frequent and serious annoyance to him, from the scrapes it thus got him into with his personal friends and acquaintance, arising out of that want of due watchfulness and care as to the personal bearing of the articles admitted into it, which it was impossible for anybody but Campbell himself to exercise, because none else could know the precise points to which the necessary attention in this respect was required to be directed. One of these scrapes, the particulars of which I was made acquainted with at the time by the two persons chiefly interested in it, was so characteristic, in all its features, of all the parties concerned, that I

will relate it here. It refers to a series of papers which the late William Hazlitt was writing at the time in the New Monthly, entitled "Boswell Redivivus," and which professed to report his (Hazlitt's) conversations with Northcote the painter.

As I was more than once present at the conversations so professed to be reported, and as Hazlitt has himself disclosed the fact that these reports are by no means to be taken *au pied de la lettre* as regards the precise portions to be attributed to the speakers respectively, there can be no impropriety in stating my belief that, generally speaking, very little dependence is to be placed on them in this particular, when they relate to opinions and sentiments, and especially when they relate to personal feelings about *living* individuals with whom Hazlitt was acquainted; and that Hazlitt often puts his own feelings and opinions into the mouth of Northcote, and *vice versâ*. Sometimes this was done consciously and purposely, sometimes not; often merely to give spirit and verisimilitude to the dialogue; not seldom to vent a little malice prepense under a guise that would

give it double pungency and force. I do not believe this was ever done with a view to escape the odium and reprisals which a system of literary personality is sure to engender; for Hazlitt never put the slightest curb upon his inclinations in this respect. But in regard to the facts and anecdotes related in these conversations, I believe Hazlitt to have been scrupulously exact in his reports.

Northcote, on his part, had an irrepressible propensity to speak unpalatable truths of his acquaintance and friends, whether dead or alive. In fact, it was his forte to say bitter and cutting things of every one—friend, foe, or stranger—who came under his notice in the course of conversation; and he knew perfectly well that Hazlitt listened to his talk with the view of giving portions of it to the public. He knew also that Hazlitt was wholly without scruple as to what he might put forth, provided it was either characteristic of the speaker, or true of the person spoken of, and that the parts most personally offensive would be those most acceptable to the reading public.

All this Northcote knew; and yet he gave

Hazlitt full permission to make any use he pleased of what might have passed between them in these desultory conversations—of course, with this ostensible restriction, that he (Hazlitt) must take care to omit anything that might get the speaker into disgrace with his personal friends; though Northcote must have also known that this was virtually no effectual restriction at all—or, if it would have been so to most men, it was none to Hazlitt in a case of this nature. The truth is, that Northcote chuckled over the wounds he thus inflicted by the hand of another; and when the ill consequences (as in the instance I am about to relate) threatened to come home to himself, he never scrupled to offer up his instrument as a sacrifice, if that would serve, and then, if necessary, reconcile the matter to *him* in the best manner he could, as he had done to the other suffering parties.

It has seemed necessary to premise thus much in explanation of what follows.

In one of the chapters of "Boswell Redivivus" there occur some passages relating to the celebrated dissenting clergyman, Dr. Mudge, one of the great ornaments of Sir

Joshua Reynolds's coterie, which show him in a light anything but favourable. They give him ample credit for his great talents and learning, but place his sincerity and consistency as a teacher of religion in a very questionable point of view, and relate personal anecdotes of him that are anything but creditable. Now that Hazlitt, in setting down these passages, did anything but repeat what Northcote had told him, no one will doubt who was acquainted with his excellent memory and his mental habits. As little can it be disputed that the facts, if such they be (of which I am wholly uninformed), related of Dr. Mudge's private life and habits, were highly worthy of being placed on record, as matters of literary history in one of its most interesting features—that of the private and personal character of celebrated literary men. But the crime of Hazlitt, in Northcote's eyes, was not to have known, as if by instinct, what Hazlitt, so far from being bound to know, could not possibly have been acquainted with, except through the direct information of Northcote himself—namely, that he (Northcote) had particular and per-

sonal reasons for desiring not to be suspected of being the expositor of these obnoxious truths, which, but for him, might have remained unknown or forgotten.

The effect of this exposure, painful as it was, partook of the ludicrous, to those who could not put much faith in the sincerity of the feelings exhibited by Northcote on the occasion. I remember calling on him a few days after the appearance of the paper in question—No. VI. of the series. He knew that I was in the habit of seeing Hazlitt almost daily; and the moment I entered the room (he was not in his usual painting room, but had retreated into the little inner room adjoining it, as if in dread of the personal consequences of what had happened) I perceived that something serious was the matter.

"I am very ill, indeed," said he, in reply to my inquiry as to his health. "I did not think I should have lived. That monster has nearly killed me."

I inquired what he meant.

"Why, that diabolical Hazlitt. Have you seen what lies he has been telling about me in his cursed 'Boswell Redivivus'? I have

been nearly dead ever since the paper appeared. Why, the man is a demon. Nothing human was ever so wicked. Do you see the dreadful hobble he has got me into with the Mudges? Not that I said what he has put down about Mudge. *But even if I had*—who could have supposed that any one in a human form would have come here to worm himself into my confidence, and get me to talk as if I had been thinking aloud, and then go and publish it all to the world! Why, they will think we go snacks in the paltry profits of his treachery. It will kill me. What am I to do about it? I would give a hundred pounds to have the paper cancelled. But that would do no good now. It has gone all over the world. I have never had a moment's rest since it appeared. I sent to Mr. Colburn to come over to me about it; but he took no notice of my message, so I went over to him. But they wou'dn't let me see him; and all I could get out of his people was, that they would tell him what I said. I told them to tell him that it would be the death of me. But Campbell has been a little more civil about

it. I wrote him a letter—*such* a letter! I'll show it you. And he has replied very handsomely, and seems to be touched by my situation. At any rate," added he, bitterly, "I have put a spoke into the wheel of that diabolical wretch Hazlitt."

And then he showed me the letter he had written to Campbell, and Campbell's reply. I think I never read anything more striking in its way than his letter to Campbell. Though brief, it was a consummate composition—pathetic even to the excitement of tears—painting the dreadful state of his mind under the blow which the (alleged) *treachery* of Hazlitt had given to it, and treating the thing as a deliberate attempt to "bring his grey hairs in sorrow to the grave." I particularly seem to remember that these very words were used in it. The whole tendency of the letter was to create an inference in Campbell's mind that the thing had come upon the writer like a thunder-clap, and that even in regard to those parts of the Conversations which were truly reported (which he denied to be the case in the matter in question), he was the most

betrayed and ill-used person in the world. And all this in the face of the fact that the Paper of which he complained was the *sixth* of a series that had appeared in the (then) most popular literary periodical of the day—that they had all appeared there with his full knowledge and consent—that he had, ever since the commencement of them, been almost daily complimented on the conspicuous figure he was cutting in his new character of the best converser of the day—and that a considerable portion of what had appeared of the "Boswell Redivivus" up to that time had consisted (on Northcote's part, at least) of depreciating estimates of many of the most conspicuous *living* writers, artists, &c.

It is, of course, with reference to these facts that I have spoken of Northcote's feelings as "ludicrous," on this unlooked-for exposure of truths of which he did not wish to be known as the author: for the astonishing force and pungency of the *unpalatable* truths that he put forth about every *living* individual of whom he spoke (sometimes in their presence, and even to themselves),* and

* In talking to Hazlitt once about the attacks on

the double edge and effect that were given to his words by the exquisitely simple and naïve manner in which he uttered them—as if an inspired *infant* were speaking—was the characteristic of his talk. And he knew all this better than anybody could tell him, and evidently prided himself upon it.

Campbell's reply to Northcote was, I remember, in a tone precisely correspondent with the letter which called for it. He declared his unmitigated horror at the outrage that had been committed on Northcote's feelings; absolved himself from all participation in it by naïvely stating that he had not seen a line of the Paper till its publication, having been absent from town on other business; and declared that "the diabolical Hazlitt should never write another line in the Magazine during *his* management of it." These, I think, were his very words.

"And so," said Northcote, when I had

"The Cockney School," in Blackwood's (which, by the bye, he greatly approved), he said to him,—"I think, Mister Hazlitt, you yourself are the most perfect specimen of the Cockney School that I ever met with:" and then he went on to give him "satisfying reasons" for this opinion!

read Campbell's reply—"and so I am to be assassinated, a worthy family is to be outraged in their dearest feelings, and a whole neighbourhood thrown into consternation, because he (Campbell) chooses to neglect his duties, or depute somebody else to do them who is incompetent to the task!"

Nothing could be more characteristic than this effusion, *apropos* to a letter which had every appearance of being written under feelings of sincere and poignant regret at the occasion to which it referred. But all Northcote chose to see in it was the fact that somebody else was in fault as well as the original culprit:—for as to he himself having had any hand in the mischief—(at least in an objectionable point of view)—this seemed never to enter his thoughts. He sowed the seeds of the most bitter personal truths in the most fertile soil for their growth and propagation—namely, the current "table-talk" of the hour—and then was lost in wonder and dismay at finding some of them bear the unexpected fruit of a personal inconvenience to himself.

The sequel of the history of these Con-

versations includes the most characteristic point of all. Not very long after the incident I have referred to above, the Conversations were re-published in a separate form, with large and valuable additions from the same source, and obtained through the same means and agent; and this with the knowledge and tacit consent of Northcote himself, and with all their obnoxious truths unexpunged, excepting those in which Northcote's own personal connexions were concerned; and the "diabolical Hazlitt" continued to write as usual in the New Monthly, under Campbell's (ostensible) editorship!

IV.

CAMPBELL AT HOME.—HIS INCAPACITY FOR FRIENDSHIP.—THE POETICAL TEMPERAMENT.

At the time of my first personal acquaintance with Campbell, he resided in Middle Scotland Yard, and my introduction to him, as before referred to, speedily led to an invitation to one of those pleasantly assorted little dinner-parties—half literary, half social—followed by a more miscellaneous assemblage in the evening, in which, at one time, he liked to indulge. But under his own roof, Campbell altogether repudiated that unrestrained "good fellow"-ship which he did not scruple to encourage and to act elsewhere.

Here is the first note I received from him in his private capacity, and almost the only one, except those of a similar kind; for our acquaintance (as I have said) never extended to anything like that intimacy which begets an epistolary correspondence.

"1, Middle Scotland Yard, Whitehall.
"26 May, 1830.

"My dear Sir,—If you and Mrs. Patmore will favour me with your company to dinner, on Tuesday next, the first of June, you will meet, I trust, the Bard of Memory, and the present editor of the 'Edinburgh Review,' together with our friend ———. An American professor and his lady will complete the proposed symposium

"Of yours, very truly,
"T. Campbell."

Campbell was an excellent host for a small and well-assorted literary dinner-party. He combined all the qualities proper to that difficult office, without a single counteracting one; the highest intellectual position and pretensions, without the smallest disposition to make them apparent—much less to placard them; a ready wit and a fine turn for social humour, without the slightest touch of that vulgar *waggery* which so often accompanies and neutralises these, and is the bane of all the intellectual society into which it is allowed to intrude; a graceful, easy, and well-bred manner and bearing, without any vestige of

stiffness on the one hand, or boisterousness on the other; finally, a perpetual consciousness of his position and duties as master of the house, yet an entire apparent forgetfulness of these in the pleasure he took in the presence of his friends.

There was but one little drawback from Campbell's perfection as a host, and that did not show itself till that period of the evening when such drawbacks are tolerated, or, at least, used to be twenty years ago, when such toleration was sometimes needed. On returning from the after-dinner-table to the drawing-room, Campbell was apt to take his place beside the prettiest woman in the room, and thenceforth to be *non est inventus* for the rest of the evening and the company.

My personal intercourse with Campbell did not (as I have said) extend beyond that of a pleasant acquaintanceship; nor do I believe that the social intercourse enjoyed with him by any one of his (so-called) friends did or could amount to much more; for, with all his amiable and attractive qualities, he was evidently a man so entirely self-centred, so totally free from personal and

individual sympathies, that a friendship with him, in anything more than the conversational sense of the term, was out of the question.

Campbell was, in this respect, the ideal of a poet—sympathizing with, and, as it were, capable of reproducing by and to his imagination effigies and incarnations of, all our human nature in all its phases of good or evil, of beauty and deformity; and (like a God) "seeing that all was good." But, as a set off against this godlike gift, he was utterly unable to transfer or transfuse his affections, even for a single moment, to any of the actual types of our actual humanity that he found about him in the real world of flesh and blood.

It will, I think, be found to hold universally, that they who have sympathized with mankind intensely and profoundly before they could possibly have had valid human grounds for doing so, either from self-knowledge or from experience—in other words, that they who have proved themselves to be *poets* before they were *men* in anything but ntuition and instinct—can never be men at

all, in the human sense of the phrase; that, in proportion as the poetical temperament is present and becomes developed, the possessor of it must submit to the sad distinction of standing apart and aloof from the rest of mankind, unloving and unloved; and that when the temperament in question is great in amount, and greatly developed at a very early age (as in the cases of Campbell, Keats, Chatterton, &c.), the owner of it must be content to accept his rich dower as a substitute for all things else that appertain to man as a member of human society. In proportion as the poet approaches the ideal of that condition, he typifies man in the abstract; and he who possesses all things in common with all men, cannot feel anything in common with any individual man. Judging from what he did, or *created*, while among us, as compared with the "appliances and means" afforded him by what is called fact and experience, Chatterton was perhaps the greatest *born* poet that ever lived; and Chatterton had nothing in common with mankind, but his marvellous intellect and his misery.

Of the only other truly *great* poets that

the world has seen—Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, and Goethe—nothing is on record that would seem distinctly to impugn the opinion I have ventured to advance; and if applied to the personal characters of the few real poets of our own day, whether living or dead, it will meet, I think, with anything but contradiction. At all events, in the case of Campbell, it is not to be gainsaid. And Campbell was greatly more of a poet in faculty than he was in fact and performance. Few men have approached nearer to a poet in the former respect than he did; and it was only his almost morbid delicacy of taste, of tact, and of ear, and his extreme fastidiousness, which prevented him from turning his powers to much greater practical results than he did. No man ever enjoyed so high and wide a poetical reputation upon so slender an amount of actual performance. And yet no man ever deserved his reputation more truly than Campbell did. Had it not been so, he would have done more; and, perhaps, have done better. But he had none of that vulgar hungering and hankering after fame which, write what they will to the contrary, no real

poet ever felt as anything more than a momentary aspiration. Campbell knew and felt that he was a poet; and as the world in some sort assented to his own faith on this point, he was content "to know no more."

Let it be observed, too, that Campbell never for an instant prostituted his high and holy calling to the necessities of his worldly condition. The literary drudgery to which he submitted during the whole of his life included no line of verse. It is probably true that, from the time when his poetical taste and judgment became matured, nine-tenths even of the little poetry he did write consisted of

"Lines that dying he would wish to blot."

In fact, from the period when he regarded his critical taste as having reached maturity, he scarcely wrote a line of poetry at all. Though this probably arose partly from that constitutional indolence, and Epicurean love of ease, which were leading features of his temperament. But I do not believe that any personal or worldly considerations would have induced Campbell to tamper with the

gift which stood him in stead of all mundane ones, and made them all look poor and mean by comparison.

Returning to the personal results of the poetical temperament in Campbell, and their effects as seen in his intercourse with the world, I may remark, that if they prevented him from becoming the *friend* of any man, they made him the acquaintance and boon companion for the time being of all,—from the poet on his prophetic tripos and the prince on his throne, to the beggar in his rags and the infant in its native simplicity. Destitute himself of actual living sympathy with either, he nevertheless, or perhaps on that very account, attracted the sympathies of each and all, by reflecting the true image of themselves in the clear cold mirror of his impassible spirit.

The result of this was, that when Campbell was in good health and spirits, or was made so for the nonce by those artificial means which during the latter part of his life were necessary to his personal comfort, he was the most popular person in the world, whatever class of society he frequented;

and though I cannot believe that anybody ever loved him to the amount even of ordinary friendship, everybody *liked* him, nobody feared him, and half those with whom he came into accidental contact fancied him to be an ordinary person like themselves, and

"Wondered with a foolish face of praise"

at the vast reputation of one so little different from the Thomsons and Johnsons of their ordinary acquaintance.

V.

CAMPBELL AND LORD AND LADY BYRON.

On one of the occasions when I met Campbell at the house of the gentleman before alluded to, we had a long and most earnest conversation on a topic which at that time occupied universal attention, no less in general than in literary society—the quarrel between Lord Byron and his wife; and I was not a little surprised that Campbell had taken up the cause of Lady Byron in the spirit, not of an impartial judge, or even of one who fancied or pretended that he was such, but of a paid and unscrupulous advocate;—the fee, in this case, being the personal compliment on the part of the lady, of having sent for him, and confided to him her version of the true nature of her grievances. This was of course done under the seal of inviolable secrecy; so that, while it was absolutely impossible, from what Campbell said, to judge

for oneself as to the validity of the alleged enormities of his "friend" Byron, his tone and words in referring to them, and the solemn earnestness with which he pronounced his own opinion as to the justice of Lady Byron's treatment of her husband, and at the same time the alleged *impossibility* of his giving any reasons for the faith that was in him on the matter in question—were calculated to produce, and in my case did produce, an impression which nothing but *facts*, testified in plain words by unbiassed witnesses, ought to produce; and (I cannot help thinking) the production of such an impression ought not to have been attempted, even by a prosecutor, much less by an advocate, in the absence of the power or the will to confirm it by unquestionable facts.

It was impossible to escape the frightful inference which Campbell's words on this occasion were calculated to produce; while, at the same time, it was impossible to feel safe in admitting that inference, or even to feel absolutely certain that it was the one he intended.

I can compare the effect which Campbell

produced upon me on this occasion only to that which was sought to be produced on the jury in a celebrated criminal trial a few years ago, when (as it has since been universally admitted) the advocate overstepped even the extremest limits of his professional duty, by attempting to screen his client at the risk of an innocent person's life; and which attempt, while it did but heighten public indignation against the guilty party, it would scarcely be too much to say, actually destroyed the innocent life against which it was so heedlessly and unjustifiably directed.

Whether the dark and fearful insinuations so studiously propagated by Campbell on the occasion I have alluded to above, and doubtless, therefore, on every other which offered itself, and supported by similar ones from other quarters, were not the "apple-pips" that killed poor Byron before his time, may be fairly made the subject of question when (if ever) the point becomes one capable of being freely and fearlessly discussed.

VI.

HIS PERSONAL CHARACTER AS MODIFIED BY THE POETICAL TEMPERAMENT.

THE personal character of Campbell exhibited that true test and constant accompaniment of a high degree of the poetical temperament when it stops short of the highest,—the power to dispense with the world and society, without the power or the desire to shun or abandon them. His mind was self-centred and self-dependent, yet social, and fond of the excitement of external thoughts and things. The objective and the subjective contended too strongly and too constantly within him to admit of his being a poet of the first order, in whom, instead of contending, they balance and strengthen each other. But that very contention it was which placed him in the highest rank of the second order; it would even have given him the capacity of attaining the first place in that rank if he had also possessed the power of sustaining his volition at the required pitch.

But in this point of his personal character and temperament lay Campbell's great deficiency as a poet. He had never sufficient control over himself, never sufficient command of his intellectual condition and movements, to be sure he might not be tempted, at a moment's warning, to abandon the wide and populous solitude of his little study at Sydenham, or the sweet society of his own "Gertrude of Wyoming," while she was growing there in all her ineffable beauty,* for the boisterous good-fellowship and noisy revelry of his friend Tom Hill's after-dinner-table, with its anomalous olla-podrida of "larking" stockbrokers, laughing punsters, roaming farce-writers, and riotous practical jokers. These were occasionally embellished and kept in check, it is true, by the refined wit and elegant scholarship of a Moore and a Rogers, the rich and racy humour of a Dubois, the easy and gentlemanly pleasantry of a Horace Smith, the mild and bland good-nature and good-fellowship of a Perry, &c. Still, even when any of these, or such as these, were present, there

* His "Gertrude of Wyoming" was entirely written at Sydenham.

must have been an unwholesome jumble of contradictions, which, like the mixing of wines, defeated the appropriate effect of each, even when it did not turn all to mischief.*

There is no doubt that Campbell liked these anomalous orgies, though he could not but hate or despise many of their component parts. It is true, also, that the alternative of solitude was indispensable to his love for society; while the converse of the proposition would be anything but true. On the contrary, the more he had courted and cultivated solitude, the more warmly she would have responded to his love, till at length he might have fairly wedded her, and the world would have had cause to bless the union, for the offspring it would have yielded. Whereas in weakly alternating between solitude and society, he failed to serve either truly; though, during the period of his health and vigour, he may be truly said to

* I am speaking here from conjecture merely, as regards everything but the names of the guests; for though I afterwards became intimately acquainted with Campbell's worthy neighbour and host of Sydenham, these famous meetings were at an end long before my time.

have loved both, and it would have been very difficult for himself to have determined which he loved best. The rest of the world, however—those of them, at least, who took sufficient interest in him to "look into his deeds with thinking eyes"—could have had no difficulty on this point. To them it must have been obvious that there was about Campbell, when in any society but that of a quiet and not ill-assorted *tête-à-tête*, or a pleasant little dinner-party at his own house, an uneasy and ill-disguised restlessness and want of repose, and an occasional absence, which plainly told that the home of his spirit was elsewhere.

To sum up this speculation in a word—(for I am afraid the reader will not accept it as anything more decisive, especially as coming from a mere acquaintance)—*Tom* Campbell was a very good fellow, and a very pleasant one withal; but he prevented Thomas Campbell from being a great poet, though not from doing great things in poetry.

There were, however, other small features in Campbell's intellectual character, each of which would alone have prevented him from

attaining poetical greatness. His intense self-consciousness (which the world ridiculously translated into personal vanity) would alone have been sufficient for this; for it rendered him incapable of wholly escaping from himself, while it prevented him from fully and fairly appreciating other states and stages of being.

Another of these qualities was his extreme, and even finical, fastidiousness. For though this quality of mind did not prevent him from originating high thoughts, and great and noble imaginations, it wholly incapacitated him from reflecting them in their height and greatness, by causing him to detect, with a morbid keenness and microscopic power of vision, those inevitable defects of execution which a perfectly natural and healthy intellectual vision would not have discovered. For what, after all, can the best written poetry be, but a sort of *cast* from the sculptured images of the poet's mind? And what are the best casts of the finest sculpture when placed beside the originals themselves? Nevertheless, for those who have never seen, and never can see, the originals (and in that

condition are all ordinary mortals, as regards the original types of the poet's creations) good casts are of little less value and virtue than the original marbles themselves. But Campbell, in fastidiously scraping away from *his* casts all the little inequalities and defects left or made by the necessary manipulation of the working, the joinings in the mould, and the air-bubbles and impurities in the material of which the cast was formed, destroyed at the same time much of the pure and natural contour and texture of the original, and with it that truth, both of detail and of general effect, the presence of which forms so large an element in our admiration of works of high art.

As a corollary from that want of repose which marked Campbell's intellectual character, there was a total absence in him of that passion for the beauties of external nature, and that consequent love of a country life, which have marked almost all great poets. His mind was of the true metropolitan order, and his "retreat" at Sydenham was a retreat in the military sense of the phrase—a movement called for by the exigencies of his position in the battle of life.

The solitude that was necessary to the health and growth of his poetical temperament he could have created for himself in great cities, as well as he could have found it in a desert; and he did so create it there till he "found himself famous;" but when that happened, the defects of his idiosyncrasy came out. He then ceased to feel any excitement apart from populous assemblies of men and women—acknowledged no movement but in the march of human events from day to day—saw no beauty but in the living human face—heard no music but in the speaking human voice—in short, knew no salvation out of the pale of great cities. In fact, when once Campbell was fairly recognised as the greatest of living English poets, he was never so happy as when he was occupied in matters which a great poet would have regarded as toys or troubles—organising a club, or founding a university, or standing forth as the saviour of an effete people that could not save itself.

It is true (as I have said) that Campbell sought his poetical inspiration in the solitude of his own thoughts and contemplations, and

found it there. But he sought it as a duty and a task, though at the same time as a relief; and he found it in infinitely less abundance and purity than he would have done had his habitual course of life been more consonant with the requirements of that poetical temperament which he undoubtedly possessed in a very high degree and a very pure form, and not a few of the results of which attain a pitch of perfection that has never been surpassed.

While thus glancing at that feature of Campbell's intellectual character which was ill-naturedly translated into "personal vanity," I must not omit to state that it was confined exclusively to his intercourse with women, and also, I believe, to the latter years of his life, after the death of his wife. But it grew upon him as he grew in years, and at length became, or was deemed so by those who were his friends for their own sakes, the besetting weakness of his life, and occasionally led him into positions somewhat undignified, it is true, for his real friends and admirers to witness, or for his enemies (if he had any) to point at and placard. Still, absolutely alone

as Campbell was, as regards family relationship, during the latter years of his life, it was but a spurious philosophy, and a questionable friendship, that would have debarred him from exercising, and thus keeping alive, those semblances of sympathy which alone bound him to society, and stood him in stead of that poetical world in which he had heretofore dwelt, but which had latterly slipt from under his feet,—leaving nothing in its place but that childlike love of the beautiful, the bright, and the unattainable, which, as it always precedes and heralds the growth of the poetical temperament, not seldom, under one form or other, follows its decay, and strews flowers upon its grave. During the whole period of the youth, the manhood, and the mature vigour of his intellect, Campbell was essentially and emphatically a poet; never attempting to blend that holy character and calling even with that of the sage or the philosopher, still less with that of the mere worldling or the mere trifler. He never was an ordinary man, pursuing the common aims and ends of men by the ordinary means. He stood apart from the world and its ways,

but without openly impugning or repudiating them; never shunning society, yet never embracing it; never out of the world, yet never truly in it; seeking and receiving nothing at its hands (in his intellectual character I mean), yet ever ready to help, or advance, or do it good.

In all these things Campbell exhibited the true and sure tests and characteristics of a born poet. How little reasonable then, how little humane, to exact or expect from such a man, at the close of such a career,—when he felt all these possessions slipping away from him, and leaving no mere worldly equivalents in their place,—that he should relapse, or rather be transformed, into a mere ordinary man, with the commonplace habits and associations of his time and circumstances! The natural and therefore the fitting change was that which really happened to him. Ceasing to be the POET, he relapsed once more into the little child from which the poet had emerged;—"pleased with the rattle" of hollow flattery; "tickled with the straw" of real or pretended admiration; crying now and then for the moon, till hushed to

sleep by the fondlings of mock affection or mercenary kindness; and then dreaming, childlike, (as not even the poet can till he again becomes a child,) of the wonders and glories and virtues

"Of that imperial palace whence he came."

VII.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF CAMPBELL AND ROGERS. LETTERS OF CAMPBELL.

THE following description of Campbell's personal appearance was written during his life-time, and formed part of what was intended as a series of Sketches from Real Life, taken at one of the chief resorts of the literary and other celebrities of the day:—

The person of this exquisite writer and delightful man is small, delicately formed, and neatly put together, without being little or insignificant. His face has all the harmonious arrangement of features which marks his gentle and elegant mind; it is oval, perfectly regular in its details, and lighted up not merely by 'eyes of youth,' but by a bland smile of intellectual serenity that seems to pervade and penetrate all the features, and impart to them all a corresponding expression, such as the moonlight lends to a summer landscape: the moonlight, not the sunshine; for there is

a mild and tender pathos blended with that expression, which bespeaks a soul that has been steeped in the depths of human woe, but has turned their waters (as only poets can) into fountains of beauty and of bliss.

There are persons whom we cannot help associating together in our imagination, without feeling or being able to fancy any sufficient reason for doing so. When we see one, we think of the other, as naturally and necessarily as if they stood to each other in the relation of mutual cause and effect. The poets Campbell and Rogers hold this imaginary relationship in many more minds, we suspect, than ours, or we should not have felt it to be worth a passing word of mention, much less have made it the reason, as we shall now do, of placing them as companion portaits in our literary gallery. But there is, in fact, a curious and beautiful assimilation between the minds and persons of the bards of Hope and of Memory, a similitude in dissimilitude, and one of a nature which corresponds as curiously with the subject of their best known works, HOPE and MEMORY; the one looking eagerly onward, as if life were in the future only; the other looking

anxiously back, as if all but the past were a shadow or a dream. In the mind of the bard of Memory we see the same natural grace and elegance, the same cultivation and refinement, the same delicacy of taste, and the same gentle and genial cast of sympathy with his fellow-beings and with external things, that we find in the bard of Hope. And when twenty years more of mingled joy and sorrow shall have passed through the heart and over the head of the latter, we may look to see as little difference in the personal attributes of the two, or rather, the bard of Hope will have gently subsided into the bard of Memory—the living type of the latter having, in the common course of nature, cast off the 'mortal coil' which holds him reluctantly to a state of being 'where nothing is but what is not.'

It must not be supposed from the above, that we see or fancy any actual physical resemblance between the person and features of Mr. Campbell and those of Mr. Rogers. If we did, our visual organs would be essentially unfitted for the task we have imposed upon them. All we mean to intimate is, that a similar conformation of mind and

temperament, modified by similar trains of thought, feeling, and study, have imparted to these two accomplished men, not a similarity, but a correspondence, in the general expression of the symbols by which their intellectual characters respectively interpret themselves to our bodily senses. Nobody will see any 'family likeness' between them; but every one duly qualified to catch 'the mind's observance in the face,' will perceive in each the evidences of equally high intellectual cultivation, expended upon a soil similarly composed in its chief attributes, and calculated to produce flowers and fruits of a similar generic character, however differing in species or individual instances. Finally, the main difference and dissimilarity they may observe will be, that in the one case (of the bard of Memory) the passions have yielded themselves willing servitors to that mild philosophy of the heart and senses which can alone subdue without subverting them; whereas in the bard of Hope they still burn with a bright intensity that would consume the altar on which they are kindled, were it a shrine less pure and holy than a poet's heart.

Begging indulgence for yielding to the temptation of straying so far from the mechanical limits of our task, we return to them by pointing to the head and face of Mr. Rogers, as an object of peculiar interest and curiosity to those who are students in such living lore. There is something preternatural in the cold, clear, marbly paleness that pervades, and, as it were, penetrates his features to a depth that seems to preclude all change, even that of death itself. Yet there is nothing in the least degree painful or repulsive in the sight, nothing that is suggestive of death, or even of decay—but, on the contrary, something that seems to speak beforehand of that immortality at which this poet has so earnestly aimed, and of which he is entitled to entertain so fair a hope. It is scarcely fanciful to say that the *living* bust of the author of 'Human Life,' 'The Pleasures of Memory,' &c., can scarcely be looked upon without calling to mind the bust of marble, sculptured by some immortal hand, which he so well deserves to have consecrated to him in the Temple of Fame.

The following characteristic letters have never appeared in print, except in the ephemeral pages of a newspaper. The first was sent to me in MS., by Campbell, to be used as I might think fit, and I inserted it in a popular weekly journal of the day.

"To Thomas Moore, Esq.

"My dear Moore,—A thousand thanks to you for the kind things which you have said of me in your 'Life of Lord Byron,'—but forgive me for animadverting to what his lordship says, at page 463 of your first volume.—It is not every day that one is mentioned in such joint pages as those of Moore and Byron.

"Lord Byron there states that, one evening at Lord Holland's, I was *nettled* at something, and the whole passage, if believed, leaves it to be inferred that I was angry, envious, and ill-mannered.—Now I never envied Lord Byron, but, on the contrary, rejoiced in his fame; in the first place from a sense of justice, and in the next place, because, as a poetical critic, he was my beneficent friend.—I never was nettled in Lord

Holland's house, as both Lord and Lady Holland can witness; and on the evening to which Lord Byron alludes, I said, 'Carry all your incense to Lord Byron,' in the most perfect spirit of good humour.—I remember the evening most distinctly—one of the happiest evenings of my life, and if Lord Byron imagined me for a moment displeased, it only shows me that, with all his transcendant powers, he was one of the most fanciful of human beings.—I by no means impeach his veracity, but I see from this case that he was subject to strange illusions.

"What feeling but that of kindness could I have towards Lord Byron?—He was always affectionate towards me, both in his writings and in his personal interviews. How strange that he should misunderstand my manner on the occasion alluded to—and what temptation could I have to show myself pettish and envious before my inestimable friend Lord Holland. The whole scene, as described by Lord Byron, is a phantom of his own imagination. Ah, my dear Moore, if we had him but back again, how easily could we settle these matters. But I have

detained you too long, and, begging pardon for all my egotism,

"I remain, my dear Moore,

"Your obliged and faithful servant,

"T. CAMPBELL.

"Middle Scotland Yard, Whitehall,
Feb. 18, 1830."

"SIR,—I am obliged to you for discrediting a silly paragraph from the 'Sligo Observer,' which is quoted in your paper to-day.

"It charges me with having abstracted the MS. of the 'Exile of Erin' from the papers of the late duke (you call him marquis) of Buckingham. If my character did not repel this calumny, I could refute it by the fact that I never in my life had access to any papers of either a Duke or Marquis of Buckingham. I wrote the song of the 'Exile of Erin' at Altona, and sent it off immediately from thence to London, where it was published by my friend, Mr. Perry, in the 'Morning Chronicle.' With the evidence of my being the author of this little piece I shall not trouble the world at present. Only if my Irish accuser has any proof that George Nugent Reynolds, Esq., ever all

to have written the song, he will consult the credit of his memory by not blazoning the anecdote, for if he asserted that the piece was his own, he assuredly told an untruth. I am inclined to believe, however, that the 'Sligo Observer's' proffered witnesses are not eminently blessed with good memories, for they offer to testify that they heard Mr. Reynolds for years before his death, and prior to my publication of the song, repeat and sing it as his own. If the matter comes to a proof, I shall be happy to prove that this is an utter impossibility, for I had scarcely composed the song, when it was everywhere printed with my name; and it is inconceivable that Mr. Reynolds could have had credit for years among his friends for a piece which those friends must have seen publicly claimed by myself.

"But the whole charge is so absurd, that I scarcely think the 'Sligo Observer' will renew it. If they do, they will only expose their folly

"I am, Sir,

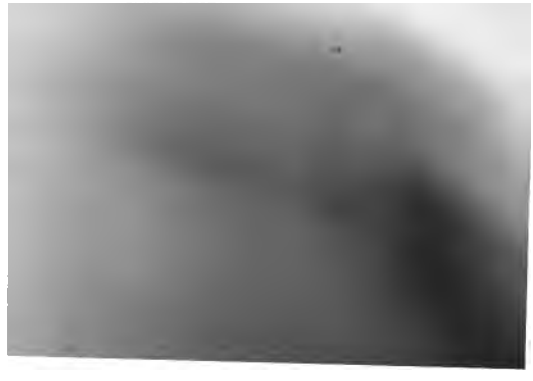
"Your obedient servant,

"THOMAS CAMPBELL.

"Middle Scotland Yard, Whitehall,
June 16, 1830."

THE

COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.



THE

COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

I.

I FIRST saw Lady Blessington under circumstances sufficiently characteristic of her extraordinary personal beauty at the period in question—about five or six and twenty years ago—to excuse my referring to them somewhat in detail, though they do not fall within the immediate scope of these Recollections; for it was not till several years afterwards that I became personally acquainted with the subject of them. It was on the opening day of that Royal Academy Exhibition which contained Lawrence's celebrated portrait of Lady Blessington—one of the very finest he ever painted, and univer-

sally known by the numerous engravings that have since been made from it. In glancing hastily round the room on first entering, I had duly admired this exquisite portrait, as approaching very near to the perfection of the art, though (as I conceived) by no means reaching it, for there were points in the picture which struck me as inconsistent with others that were also present. Yet I could not, except as a vague theory, lay the apparent discrepancies at the door of the artist. They might belong to the original; though I more than doubted this explanation of them; for there are certain qualities and attributes which necessarily imply the absence of certain others, and consequently of their corresponding expressions.

Presently, on returning to this portrait, I saw standing before it, as if on purpose to confirm my theory, the lovely original. She was leaning on the arm of her husband, Lord Blessington, while *he* was gazing in fond admiration on the portrait. And then I saw how impossible it is for an artist to "flatter" a really beautiful woman, and that, in attempting to do so, he is certain, however

skilful, to fall into the error of blending incompatible expressions in the same face; as in fact even Lawrence's portraits of celebrated "beauties" invariably do. He was either not content to represent them as they really were, or incapable of doing so. They one and all (and the one now in question more than most others) include an artificial and meretricious character, which is wholly incompatible with the presence of perfect female beauty, either of form or expression.

I have seen no other instance so striking, of the inferiority of art to nature when the latter reaches the ideal standard, as in this celebrated portrait of Lady Blessington. As the original stood before it on the occasion I have alluded to, she fairly "killed" the copy, and this no less in the individual details than in the general effect. Moreover, what I had believed to be errors and shortcomings in the picture were wholly absent in the original. There is about the former a consciousness, a "pretension," a leaning forward, and a looking forth, as if to claim or court notice and admiration, of which there was no touch in the latter.

So strong was the impression made upon my mind by this first sight of one of the loveliest women of her day, that, although it is five or six and twenty years ago, I could at this moment place my foot on the spot where she stood, and before which her portrait hung—a little to the left of the door as you entered the great room of the old Royal Academy.

I have never since beheld so pure and perfect a vision of female loveliness, in what I conceive to be its most perfect phase, that, namely, in which intellect does not predominate over form, feature, complexion, and the other physical attributes of female beauty, but only serves to heighten, purify, and irradiate them; and it is this class of beauty which cannot be equalled on canvas.

There is another class of beauty which may be, and which, indeed, often is, surpassed by the painter's art. This is the class formerly adopted by Westall as the *ideal* of female beauty, but now grown obsolete by the progress of a more pure, because a more natural, taste in art. This class of face, though not uncommon in nature, and more prevalent among ourselves than in any other modern

people, may readily be surpassed by art, and often is so, because its beauty is that of *form* merely. It is not only distinct from expression, but incompatible with it, or nearly so—with what is understood by expression in a *general* sense; incompatible, because if expression of any complicated kind be given to it, the perfection of form is changed, and its beauty for the time being dissipated.

This class of beauty was not the ideal of the ancients; still less of the great Italian masters. There is no touch of it in any of those antique remains that are recognised as typical of the goddess of beauty—least of all in the most famous of all—the Venus dei Medici.

Some of Correggio's heads are the highest examples in existence of the true ideal of female beauty—the beauty of expression; but there is not one of them that is not surpassed by actual nature at any given time. This was the ideal of Lawrence. It was this which he tried to surpass whenever it came before him, instead of merely to represent it; and the result was that the more signal the instance which presented itself to him, the

more signally he failed,—by giving that peculiar expression (not to be safely described) which is incompatible with *any* ideal of female beauty, because incompatible with the simultaneous existence of those intellectual and moral qualities on which this highest phase of female beauty depends. And he never failed more signally than in the celebrated portrait which has called forth these remarks,—a portrait which owes its celebrity to the fiat of those who had *not* seen the original at the time it was painted.

At this time Lady Blessington was about six-and-twenty years of age; but there was about her face, together with that beaming intelligence which rarely shows itself upon the countenance till that period of life, a bloom and freshness which as rarely survive early youth, and a total absence of those undefinable marks which thought and feeling still more rarely fail to leave behind them. Unlike all other beautiful faces that I have seen, hers was, at the time of which I speak, neither a history nor a prophecy; not a book to read and study, a problem to solve, or a mystery to speculate upon, but a star to

kneel before and worship—a picture to gaze upon and admire—a flower the fragrance of which seemed to reach and penetrate you from a distance, by the mere looking upon it;—in short, an end and a consummation in itself, not a promise of anything else.

Lady Blessington had not, at the period I have just spoken of, done anything to distinguish herself in the literary world; though the fine taste in art and the splendid hospitalities of her husband, and her own personal attractions and intellectual fascinations, had already made their residence in St. James's Square the resort of all that was most conspicuous in art, literature, and social and political distinction. It would be difficult to name any one among the many remarkable men of that day (namely, from 1818, when her marriage with Lord Blessington took place, to 1822, when they went abroad to reside for several years—indeed, until Lord Blessington's death in 1829) who then enjoyed, or have since acquired, a European reputation, with whom Lady Blessington was not on terms of social intimacy, which amounted in almost every case to a certain mild and subdued phase

of personal friendship—that only friendship which the progress of modern civilization has left among us—that, namely, which may subsist between man and woman.

A tithe only of the names of those who ranked among Lady Blessington's friends at this period, and who remained such during their respective lives, would serve to show that her attractions were not those of mere beauty, or of mere wealth and station. Quite as little were they those of intellectual supremacy or literary distinction; for at this period she had acquired none of the latter, and at no time did she possess the former. In fact, it was the *mediocrity* of her talents which secured and maintained for Lady Blessington that unique position which she held in the literary and social world of London during the twenty years following her husband's death. Not that she could ever have compassed, much less have maintained that position, unassisted by the rank and wealth which her marriage with Lord Blessington gave her, or even in the absence of that personal beauty which lent the crowning prestige and the completing charm to her other attractions. But none of these, nor all of

them united, would have enabled her to gain and keep the unparalleled position she held for the twenty years preceding her death, as the centre of all that was brilliant in the intellect, and distinguished in the literary, political, and social life of London, had she not possessed that indefinable charm of manner and personal bearing which was but the outward expression of a spirit good and beautiful in itself, and therefore intensely sympathizing with all that is good and beautiful in all things. The talisman possessed by Lady Blessington, and which drew around her all that was bright and rich in intellect and in heart, was that "blest condition" of temperament and of spirit which, for the time being, engendered its like in all who came within the scope of its influence. Her rank and wealth, her beauty and celebrity, did but attract votaries to the outer precincts of the temple, many of whom only came to admire and wonder, or to smile and depreciate, as the case might be. But once within the influence of the spell, all were changed into worshippers, because all felt the presence of the deity—all were penetrated by that atmosphere of mingled goodness and sweetn

which beamed forth in her bright smiles, became musical in the modulations of her happy voice, or melted into the heart at her cordial words.

If there never was a woman more truly "fascinating" than Lady Blessington, it was because there never was one who made less effort to be so. Not that she did not *desire* to please: no woman desired it more. But she never *tried* to do so—never felt that she was doing so—never (so to speak) cared whether she did so or not. There was an *abandon* about her,—partly attributable to temperament, partly to her birth and country, and partly, no doubt, to her consciousness of great personal beauty,—which, in any woman less happily constituted, would have degenerated into something bordering on vulgarity. But in her it was so tempered by sweetness of disposition, and so kept in check by an exquisite social tact, as well as by natural good breeding as contradistinguished from artificial—in other words, a real sympathy, not an affected one, with the feelings of others—that it formed the chief charm and attraction of her character and bearing.

II.

LADY BLESSINGTON IN ITALY.—HER ACQUAINTANCE WITH LORD BYRON.—HER INFLUENCE OVER HIM.

My personal acquaintance with Lady Blessington did not commence till her return from abroad, after her husband's death. But as her social career from the period of her marriage with Lord Blessington in 1818, up to his death in 1829, was marked by features of great public interest, particularly that almost daily intercourse with Lord Byron for the last nine months of his strange life, which gave rise to her published "Conversations" with him, and her residence in Paris during the Revolution of July 1830, the reader may like to have before him a brief summary of the events of that period, as noted in her own "Diary," which I have reason to believe she continued up to her death.

From her marriage in 1818, till the autumn of 1822, Lord and Lady Blessington

in St. James's Square, where, as I have said, she formed an acquaintance, and in most cases an intimacy, with a very large proportion of the literary and political celebrities of that day. Here are a few of those of her early friends who have already passed from the scene, or still embellish it:—Luttrell, William Spencer, Dr. Parr, Mathias, Rogers, Moore, John Kemble, Sir William Drummond, Sir William Gell, Conway, Sir Thomas Lawrence, the Locks of Norbury Park, Sir George Beaumont, Lord Alvanley, Lord Dudley and Ward, Lord Guildford, Sir John Herschell, &c.; Prince Polignac, Prince Lieven, the Duc de Cazes, Count Montalembert, Mignet, &c.; and among our English political celebrities, Lords Grey and Castlereagh, Lord John Russell, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Palmerston, Lord Hertford, Sir Francis Burdett, &c.

In the autumn of 1822 the Blessingtons left England with a view to a lengthened residence abroad. They stayed at Paris for a week, and then proceeded rapidly to Switzerland—as rapidly, at least, as the princely style of their travelling arrangements permitted; for nothing could exceed the lavish

luxury with which Lord Blessington insisted on surrounding his young and beautiful wife, whose simple tastes, and still more her genial sympathies with all classes of her fellow-beings, by no means coveted such splendour, though her excitable temperament enabled her richly to enjoy its results.

They reached the Jura in five days; travelled in Switzerland for about a month, and then returned, through Geneva and Lyons, into Dauphiny, where, by one of those unaccountable fancies in which only those who are satiated with luxury and splendour ever indulge, they took up their abode at a vile inn (the only one the town—Vienne—afforded), and submitted for three weeks to all sorts of privations and inconveniences, in order, ostensibly, to explore the picturesque and antiquarian beauties of the most ancient city of the Gauls and its vicinity, but in reality, to find in a little bracing and wholesome contrast, a relief from that ennui and lassitude which, at that time of day, used to induce Sybarite lords to drive Brighton stages, and sensitive ladies to brave the dangers of Arabian deserts.

From Vienne they proceeded to Avignon, at which city they made a stay of several weeks, and were fêted by the notabilities of the place in an incessant round of dinners, balls, *soirées*, &c., which, marked as they were by all the deficiencies and *désagrémens* of French provincial hospitality, were nevertheless enjoyed by Lady Blessington with a relish strongly characteristic of that cordial and happy temperament which rendered her the most popular person of whatever circle she formed a part.

Loitering for about six weeks more between Avignon and Genoa, they arrived at the latter city at the end of March, 1823, and the next day Lady Blessington was introduced (at his own particular request) to Lord Byron, who was residing in the Casa Saluzzo, at the village of Albaro, a short distance from the city.

Lady Blessington's intercourse with Lord Byron, so pleasantly and characteristically described by herself in the well-known published "Conversations," and as she was accustomed to describe it *viva voce*, and still more pleasantly and characteristically in her own conversations at Seamore Place and Gore

House, formed an era in her life, and probably contributed not a little to the unique position which she afterwards held in London society for so many years: for Byron's death occurred so soon after his quitting Genoa for Greece, and the last few months of his residence in Italy had been so almost exclusively devoted to that friendly intercourse with the Blessingtons, in which he evidently took unusual pleasure, that Lady Blessington may be considered as having been the depositary of his last thoughts and feelings; and she may certainly be regarded as having exercised a very beneficial influence on the tone and colour of the last and best days of that most strange and wayward of men.

Lady Blessington's first interview with Byron took place at the gate of the courtyard of his own villa at Albaro. Lord Blessington, who had long been acquainted with Byron, had called on him immediately on their arrival at Genoa, leaving Lady Blessington in the carriage. In the course of conversation Lord Byron, without knowing that she was there, requested to be presented to Lady Blessington—a request so unusual

on his part in regard to English travellers, of whatever rank or celebrity, that Lord Blessington at once told him that Lady B. was in the carriage with her sister, Miss Power. On learning this, Lord Byron immediately hurried out to the gate, without his hat, and acted the amiable to the two ladies, in a way that was very unusual with him—so much so that, as Lady Blessington used to describe the interview, he evidently felt called upon to *apologise* for not being, in her case at least, quite the savage that the world reported him.

At Byron's earnest request they entered the villa, and passed two hours there, during which it is clear that the peculiar charm of Lady Blessington's manner exercised its usual spell—that the cold, scorning and world-wearied spirit of Byron was, for the time being, "subdued to the quality" of the genial and happy one with which it held converse—and that both the poet and the man became once more what nature intended them to be.

On the Blessingtons' departure, Byron asked leave to visit them the next day at their hotel, and from that moment there commenced an interchange of genial and

friendly intimacy between Byron and Lady Blessington which, untouched as it was by the least taint of flirtation on either side, might, had it endured a little longer, have redeemed the personal character of Byron, and saved him for those high and holy things for which his noble and beautiful genius seems to have been created, but which the fatal Nemesis of his early life interdicted him from accomplishing.

Lady Blessington seems, in fact, to have been the only woman holding his own rank and station with whom Byron was ever at his ease, and with whom, therefore, he was himself. With all others he seemed to feel a constraint which irritated and vexed him into the assumption of vices, both of manner and moral feeling, which did not belong to him. It is evident, from Lady Blessington's details of conversations which must be (in substance, at least) correctly reported, that Byron had a heart as soft as a woman's or a child's. He used to confess to her that any affecting incident or description in a book moved him to tears, and in recalling some of the events of his early life, he was frequently

so moved in her presence. His treatment, also, of Lord Blessington, who received the news of the death of his only son, Lord Mountjoy, just after their arrival at Genoa, was marked by an almost feminine softness and gentleness.

Byron's personal regard for Lord Blessington had its origin in the same gentleness and goodness of heart. "I must say," exclaimed he to Lady Blessington, at an early period of their acquaintance, "that I never saw 'the milk of human kindness' overflow in any nature to so great a degree as in Lord Blessington's. I used, before I knew him well, to think that Shelley was the most amiable person I ever knew; but now I think that Lord B. bears off the palm; for *he* has been assailed by all the temptations that so few can resist—those of unvarying prosperity—and has passed the ordeal victoriously; while poor Shelley had been tried in the school of adversity only, which is not such a corrupter as that of prosperity. I do assure you that I have thought better of mankind since I have known Blessington intimately."

It is equally certain that he thought better of womankind after his ten weeks of almost daily intimacy with Lady Blessington at this period; and if his previous engagement with the Greek Committee had not in some sort compelled him to go to Greece, where his life was sacrificed to the excitements and annoyances of the new situation in which he thus placed himself, it is more than probable that his whole character and course of life would have been changed. For what Byron all his life needed in women, and never once found, except in his favourite sister, Mrs. Leigh, was a woman not to love or be beloved by (he always found, or fancied he had found, more than enough of both these), but one whom he could thoroughly esteem and regard for the frankness, sweetness, and goodness of her disposition and temper, while he could entirely admire in her those perfect graces and elegances of manner, and those exquisite charms of person, in the absence of which his fastidious taste and exacting imagination could not realize that ideal of a woman which was necessary to render his intellectual intercourse with the sex agree-

able, or even tolerable. Merely clever or even brilliant women—such as Madame de Stael—he hated; and even those who, like his early acquaintance, Lady J——, were both clever and beautiful, he was more than indifferent to, because, being, from their station and personal pretensions, the leaders of fashion, they were compelled to adopt a system of life wholly incompatible with that *natural* one in which alone his own habits of social intercourse enabled him to sympathize. Those women again who, with a daring reckless as his own, openly professed a passion for *him* (like the unhappy Lady C—— L——, or the scarcely less unfortunate Countess G——), he either despised and shrank from (as in the first of these instances), or merely pitied and tolerated (as in the second). But in Lady Blessington, Byron found realized all his notions of what a woman in his own station of life might and ought to be, in the present state and stage of society; beautiful as a muse, without the smallest touch of personal vanity; intellectual enough not merely to admire and appreciate *his* pretensions, but to hold intellectual intercourse with him on

a footing of perfect relative equality; full of enthusiasm for everything good and beautiful, yet with a strong good sense which preserved her from any taint of that "sentimentality" which Byron above all things else detested in women; surrounded by the homage of all that was high in intellect and station, yet natural and simple as a child; lapped in an almost fabulous luxury, with every wish anticipated and every caprice a law, yet sympathizing with the wants of the poorest; an unusually varied knowledge of the world and of society, yet fresh in spirit and earnest in impulse as a newly emancipated school-girl:—such was Lady Blessington when first Lord Byron became acquainted with her, and the intercourse which ensued seemed to soften, humanize, and make a new creature of him.

That I do not say this at random is proved by the fact that within a very few days of the commencement of their acquaintance Byron wrote a most touching letter to his wife (though any reconciliation had at this time become impossible), having for its object to put her mind at ease relative to any

supposed intention on his part to remove their daughter from her mother's care—such a fear on Lady Byron's part having been communicated to him. This letter (which appears in Moore's "Life of Byron") he prevailed on Lady Blessington to cause to be delivered personally to Lady Byron by a mutual friend, who was returning to England from Genoa.

The humanizing influence of which I have spoken lasted less than three months, and shortly after its close Byron went to Greece, where he died.

On quitting Genoa, in the early part of June, 1823, the Blessingtons proceeded to Florence, where they remained sight-seeing for three weeks, and then proceeded to Rome. Here they stayed for another week, and then took up their residence for a lengthened period at Naples. Having hired the beautiful (furnished) *palazzo* of the Prince and Princess di Belvedere, at Vomero, overlooking the beautiful bay, they not a little astonished its princely owners at the requirements of English luxury, and the extent of English wealth, by almost entirely refurnish-

ing it, and engaging a large suite of Italian servants in addition to their English ones.

In this, one of the most splendid residences of Italy, Lady Blessington again became, for nearly three years, the centre of all that was brilliant among her own travelling compatriots, and of much that was distinguished among the Italian nobility and litterati.

In February, 1826, they left Naples, and the next year was passed between Rome, Florence, Genoa, and Pisa. The remainder of their residence in Italy was completed by another few months at Rome, and about a year more between the other principal cities of Italy that the travellers had not previously visited.

III.

LADY B. AT PARIS DURING THE REVOLUTION OF 1830. —HER RETURN TO ENGLAND.—SKETCH FROM THE RING IN HYDE PARK.

In the June of next year (1828) we again find Lady Blessington at Paris, after an absence of more than six years; and here it was her destiny to witness the events of the last days of the old Bourbon dynasty, and this in the almost daily presence of and intercourse with those personal friends and near family connexions who were the most devoted and chivalrous of its supporters,—the Duc and Duchesse de Guiche, the Duc de Grammont (father of the Duc de Guiche), the venerable Madame Crauford, the Duc de Cazes, Prince Polignac, &c.

The splendour and luxury with which Lady Blessington was at this, as at all other periods of her marriage, surrounded by the somewhat too gorgeous taste of her doting husband, may be judged of by a brief description of her own *chambre à coucher* and

dressing-room, in the superb hotel (formerly that of Marshal Ney) which they occupied in the Rue de Bourbon, its principal rooms looking on the Quay d'Orsay and the Tuileries gardens. The bed, which stood as usual in a recess, rested upon the backs of two exquisitely carved silver swans, every feather being carved in high relief. The recess was lined throughout with white fluted silk bordered with blue embossed lace, the frieze of the recess being hung with curtains of pale blue silk lined with white satin. The remainder of the furniture, namely, a richly-carved sofa, occupying one entire side of the room, an *écritoire*, a *bergère*, a book-stand, a Psyche-glass, and two *coffres* for jewels, lace, &c., were all of similar fancy and workmanship, and all silvered, to match the bed. The carpet was of rich uncut pile, of a pale blue. The hangings of the dressing-room were of blue silk, covered with lace, and richly trimmed with frills of the same; so also were the toilette-table, the *chaiselongue*, the dressing-stools, &c. There was a *salle-de-bain*, attached, draped throughout with white muslin, trimmed with lace, and con-

taining a sofa and *bergère* covered with the same. The bath of white marble was inserted in the floor, and on the ceiling was painted a Flora scattering flowers with one hand, and suspending in the other an alabaster lamp, in the shape of a lotos.

The whole of the vast hotel occupied by the Blessingtons during the first year of this their second lengthened residence in Paris, was fitted up with a luxury and at a cost no less lavish than those bestowed on the rooms I have just described. But it is proper to state here that Lady Blessington herself, though possessing exquisite taste in such matters, by no means coveted or encouraged the lavish expense which her husband bestowed upon her; and in the case of the particular rooms just described, he so managed as not to let her see them till they were completed and ready for her reception. Indeed, Lady Blessington had, in all pecuniary matters, much more of worldly prudence than her lord. The enormous cost of entirely furnishing a hotel like that in which they now resided, may be judged of by what was said to be the original cost of the ornamental

decorations of the walls alone, including mirrors,—namely, a million of francs.

With this year the more than queen-like splendours and luxuries of Lady Blessington's life ceased. In 1829 her husband died, leaving her a jointure of 2500*l.* a-year, and a large amount of personal property in the shape of furniture, plate, pictures, objects of *vertú*, &c. After witnessing all the excitements of the "Three Days" of July, 1830, and partaking personally in some of the dangers connected with them, Lady Blessington, at the close of the autumn of that year, returned to England, there to reside uninterruptedly till within a few weeks of her death.

The following sketch was taken from the Ring in Hyde Park, at the period of Lady Blessington's London life now referred to:—

Observe that green chariot just making the turn of the unbroken line of equipages. Though it is now advancing towards us with at least a dozen carriages between, it is to be distinguished from the throng by the elevation of its driver and footman above the ordi-

nary level of the line. As it comes nearer, we can observe the particular points that give it that perfectly *distingué* appearance which it bears above all others in the throng. They consist of the *white* wheels lightly picked out with green and crimson; the high-stepping action, blood-like shape, and brilliant *manège* of its dark bay horses; the perfect *style* of its driver; the height (six feet two) of its slim, spider-limbed, powdered footman, perked up at least three feet above the roof of the carriage, and occupying his eminence with that peculiar air of accidental superiority, half *petit-maître*, half plough-boy, which we take to be the ideal of footman-perfection; and, finally, the exceedingly light, airy, and (if we may so speak) intellectual character of the whole set-out. The arms and supporters blazoned on the centre panels, and the small coronet beneath the window, indicate the nobility of station; and if ever the nobility of nature was blazoned on the 'complement extern' of humanity, it is on the lovely face within—lovely as ever, though it has been loveliest among the lovely for a longer time than we shall dare call to our own recollection,

much less to that of the fair being before us. If the Countess of Blessington (for it is she whom we are asking the reader to admire—howbeit at second-hand, and through the doubly refracting medium of plate-glass and a blonde veil) is not now so radiant with the bloom of mere youth, as when she first put to shame Sir Thomas Lawrence's *chef-d'œuvre* in the form of her own portrait, what she has lost in the graces of mere complexion she has more than gained in those of intellectual expression. Nor can the observer have a better opportunity than the present of admiring that expression; unless, indeed, he is fortunate enough to be admitted to that intellectual converse in which its owner shines beyond any other female of the day, and with an earnestness, a simplicity, and an *abandon*, as rare in such cases as they are delightful.

The lady, her companion, is the Countess de St. Marsault, her sister, whose finely-cut features and perfectly oval face bear a striking general resemblance to those of Lady B., without being at all *like* them.

It is perhaps worth while to remark here,

in passing, that Lady Blessington's peculiar taste in dress and in equipage was not only in advance of her time, but essentially correct: in proof of which it may be stated, that though their early results stood alone for years after they were first introduced, they at last became the universal fashions of the day. Lady Blessington was the first to introduce the beautifully simple fashion of wearing the hair in bands, but was not imitated in it till she had persevered for at least seven years; and it was the same with the white wheels, and peculiar style of *picking out* of her equipages; both features being universally adopted some ten or a dozen years after Lady Blessington had introduced and persevered in them.

IV.

LADY BLESSINGTON'S POWERS OF CONVERSATION. HER LETTERS TO P. G. PATMORE.

It was shortly after her return to England that I was personally introduced to Lady Blessington by a mutual friend, and my acquaintance with her continued from that time till her departure from England a few weeks before her death.

At the period of my first introduction to Lady Blessington, she had just contributed to the New Monthly Magazine (then under the direction of her friend Sir Edward Bulwer) the "Conversations with Lord Byron," and they had obtained her a reputation for literary talent, of which her previous efforts, two slight works entitled "The Magic Lanthorn," and "A Tour in the Netherlands," had given little or no promise. But these printed "Conversations" *with* Byron, characteristic as they are both of him and of herself, are flat and spiritless—or rather marrowless—compared with Lady Bless

ton's own *vivâ voce* conversations *of* him, one half-hour of which contained more pith and substance—more that was worth remembering and recording—than the whole octavo volume in which the printed "Conversations" were afterwards collected. In fact, talking, not writing, was Lady Blessington's forte; and the "Conversations" in question, though the slightest and least studied of all her numerous productions, was incomparably the best, because the most consonant, in subject and material, with her intellectual temperament,—which was fluent and impulsive, rather than meditative or sentimental. After reading any one of her books (excepting the "Conversations,") you could not help wondering at the reputation Lady Blessington enjoyed as the companion, on terms of perfect intellectual equality, of the most accomplished and brilliant writers, statesmen, and other celebrities of the day. But the first half-hour of her talk solved the mystery at once. Her genius lay (so to speak) in her tongue. The pen paralysed it, changing what would otherwise have been originality into a mere echo or recollection—

what would have awakened and excited the hearer by its freshness and brilliance, into what wearied and put to sleep the reader by its platitude and common-place. As a novel-writer Lady Blessington was but a better sort of Lady Stepney or Lady C—— B——. But as a talker she was a better sort of De Stael—as acute, as copious, as off-hand, as original, and almost as sparkling, but without a touch of her arrogance, exigence, or pedantry; and with a faculty for listening that is the happiest and most indispensable of all the talents that go to constitute a good talker; for any talk that is not the actual and immediate result of listening, is at once a bore and an impertinence.

I soon found, on becoming personally acquainted with her, that another of the attractions which contributed to give Lady Blessington that unique position in London society which she held for so many years, and even more exclusively and conspicuously after her husband's death than before it, was that strong personal interest which she felt, and did not scruple to evince, on every topic on which she was called upon to busy herself,

—whether it was the fashion of a cap or the fate of nations. In this her habit of mind was French rather than English—or rather it was Irish—which is no less demonstrative than the French, and infinitely more impressible. Of French demonstrations of sudden interest and goodwill you doubt the sincerity, even while you accept and acknowledge them. They are the shining small change of society, which you accept for their pleasing aspect, but do not take the trouble of carrying them away with you, because you know that before you can get them home they will have melted into thin air. But there was no doubting the cordiality and sincerity of Lady Blessington, while their outward demonstrations lasted; which is perhaps all one has any right to require in such matters.

In giving a few extracts from my occasional correspondence with Lady Blessington, I cannot do better than commence them by one of the notes that I received from her at a very early stage of our acquaintance; because it will (in my own estimation, at least) exonerate me from the charge of any unwar-

rantable intrusion on private life in these public notices of one whose *social* celebrity at least had acquired a European reputation.

I am not able to call to mind the occasion of the following graceful note, except that it related to something which had appeared in a newspaper I conducted at that time:—

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Seamore Place, Friday Evening.

"DEAR SIR,—I do not think —— —— will feel any objection to the mention you have made of him. Of one thing I am quite sure,—which is, that neither he nor I could mistake the motive of any use made of our names *by you*.

"I am, indeed, sorry to hear that your connexion with the —— is coming to a crisis, if that crisis leads to a separation; because I wish well to the journal, and so wishing, must desire your continuance in it.

"I have been wishing to see you for some time, and shall be glad when you can make it convenient to call. I have reason to think

that Mr. —— has been misrepresented to me. But more of this when we meet.

"Believe me,

"Very sincerely yours,

"M. BLESSINGTON."

The two following letters relate to the subject glanced at in the preceding one. Circumstances make it proper that I should not dissipate the little mystery that involves them, further than to say that they refer to one of those literary intrigues which are met with even in the "best regulated" republic of letters:—

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Monday, Dec. 10, 1832.

"DEAR SIR,—Since I last saw you, I have heard nothing on the subject we then talked of. I have not seen the person who gave me the information I reported to you, and probably shall not for some weeks or months, as I do not see him often, and in the last six months have not seen him more than twice or thrice. Of the truth of the intelligence he gave me I

have not the slightest doubt, as during two years that I have known him I have never had the least cause to call his veracity in question, and I believe him incapable of any underhand or unhandsome conduct. As I know nothing of *one* of the parties, and have had no reason to think favourably of the *other*, I must give the preference of belief to the person of whom I entertain a good opinion.

"Believing Mr. —— to be incapable of deception or misrepresentation, I can see no objection to your seeking an interview with him, and stating your feelings. Mr. ——, in seeking a position which he was led to believe you were on the point of losing, violated no duty to you, as he was neither your friend nor acquaintance; but I am quite sure he would *not* seek the position had he not been assured that you are to leave it; and I am equally sure that he never addressed himself to Mr. —— on the subject, but that it was proposed to him by *his friends*, who represented themselves as being in Mr. ——'s confidence.

"I have now told you all I know. * * *

"I shall be glad to see you, to talk over more fully your future prospects, and remain,

"Dear sir, very sincerely yours,

"M. BLESSINGTON."

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Seamore Place, Monday Night.

"DEAR SIR,—I agree with you in believing that the whole story was a plot got up by the contemptible family in question, and that Mr. ——, who is, as far as I have had an opportunity of judging, an honourable well-intentioned young man, was the dupe of it.

"I wish, as an act of justice, to impress on your mind that Mr. —— behaved in the whole affair in a very gentlemanly manner; and it will give me pleasure to say as much for Mr. ——. * * * * *

"I have such a dread of even the most remote contact with plotters and *intriguantes*, that I bless my stars I am no longer exposed to the vulgar observations of the persons who have already made free with my name. It will be my own fault if, after the experience I have lately had, I commit myself again.

* * * I shall be glad to hear that you are going on amicably, and, always anxious to be of use to you,

"Believe me, dear sir, sincerely yours,

"M. BLESSINGTON."

The following notes relate to the same early period of my acquaintance with their writer. I make no apology for the seeming egotism of not expunging the personal compliments to myself which these and other of Lady Blessington's notes contain, because my object in these Recollections is to mark the intellectual character and habits of the writer: and nothing does this more than little points of this nature.

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Seamore Place, Sept. 10.

"DEAR SIR,—I have this moment received a very beautiful volume entitled 'The Album Wreath,' and beg you will do me the favour of making my acknowledgment to Mr. Francis, whose address I do not know. The present is enhanced, from the

circumstance of its coming to me through the medium of yourself, of whose health and prosperity it will always give me pleasure to hear.

"Believe me, dear Sir,

"Very sincerely yours,

"MARGUERITE BLESSINGTON."

The following note marks one of Lady Blessington's favourite studies—that of genealogy:—

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Seamore Place, Wednesday.

"DEAR SIR,—A great mistake has crept into the notice of the death of Captain Lock.* He is stated to have been the grandson of the Duke of Leinster. This was not the case. The mother of Captain Lock was Miss Jennings, daughter of the celebrated *Dog* Jennings—so-called from having brought to this country the famous marble known as

* The singularly beautiful William Lock, of Norbury Park, who was drowned in the Lake of Como, in sight of his newly-wedded bride.

the Dog of Alcibiades. The brother of Captain Lock's father, the late Charles Lock, Esq., married Miss Ogilvie, daughter of the Duchess Dowager of Leinster. You have no idea how much importance people attach to such trifles as these, which after all are of no consequence. I happen to have so very numerous an acquaintance that I am *au fait* of genealogies—a stupid, but sometimes useful knowledge.

"I shall be glad to see you when you have leisure, and remain,

"Dear Sir, very sincerely yours,

"M. BLESSINGTON."

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Seamore Place, Monday Evening.

"DEAR SIR,—By mistake I directed my note of Monday morning to Camden Hill instead of Craven Hill. Have you got it?

"The forthcoming dissection of my 'Conversations,' announced, is said to be from the pen of Mr. ——; and I think it not unlikely, for he is a reckless person wh-

nothing to lose, and who, if common fame speaks true, is a man

'Who dares do more than may become a man,'

or a gentleman, at least. Having been at Genoa while we were there, he is probably hurt at not being named in the 'Conversations.' But the truth is, Byron fought so shy of admitting the acquaintance to us, though we knew it existed, that I could say nought but what must have been offensive to his feelings had I named him.

"It was one of the worst traits in Byron, to receive persons in private, and then deny the acquaintance to those whom he considered might disapprove of it. This was in consequence of that want of self-respect which was his bane, but which was the natural consequence of the attacks he had experienced, acting on a very irritable and nervous constitution.

"I have letters from Naples up to the 2nd. Lord Bentinck died there on that day, and is succeeded in his title and fortune by his brother, Mr. Hill, who has been our minis-

ter at Naples since 1825 up to the appointment of Lord Ponsonby.

"Very sincerely yours,

"M. BLESSINGTON."

I will now give a few extracts from my later epistolary intercourse with Lady Blessington; the object I have in view in the choice of them being, like all the rest of these Recollections, to mark those features of her intellectual character which cannot be gathered from her published writings.

Though Lady Blessington's poetical talents were not above mediocrity, she had a fine perception and an enthusiastic admiration of the poetical faculties of others, and never missed an opportunity of testifying her feelings.

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Gore House, June 14, 1844.

"MY DEAR MR. PATMORE,—I congratulate you on the charming poems of your son. They are indeed beautiful, and as fresh and original as beautiful. My friend M

Procter had prepared me for something charming, but these poems, I confess, surpass my expectations, although they were greatly raised. I hope you will make me personally acquainted with the young poet when you and he have leisure. Believe me,

"My dear Mr. Patmore,

"Very sincerely yours,

"M BLESSINGTON."

The note below refers to an inquiry I had been led to make relative to a criticism on "Chatsworth," said to have been written by Lady Blessington, and attributing that work to my esteemed friend Mr. Plumer Ward, who had requested me to learn, if possible, whether the graceful and gratifying things said of him in the critique in question were really written by her.

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Gore House, July 6, 1844.

"MY DEAR MR. PATMORE,—I have no interest whatever in the —— —— beyond that of wishing it may prove a successful

speculation to the owner, the Baroness de Calabrella, who is an acquaintance of mine. I have never written a notice of any book in the paper; and a few paragraphs of fashionable movements, communicated to the baroness at her earnest request, and without any remuneration, have been the extent of my aid to the paper.

"With a fervent admiration of Mr. Plumer Ward, be assured that, had an occasion offered, I should have expressed it. Believe me,

"My dear Mr. Patmore,

"Very truly yours,

"M. BLESSINGTON."

Few readers will expect to find a work like Jerrold's Magazine lying on the gilded tables of Gore House. But the following note will show that Lady Blessington's sympathies extended to all classes:—

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON TO P. G. PATMORE.

"MY DEAR MR. PATMORE,—I have reading with great interest and pl
'Recollections' of Hazlitt

fine tact and perception, as well as a healthy philosophy. I wish all men of genius had such biographers—men who, alive to their powers of mind, could look with charity and toleration on their failings. Your 'Recollections' of him made me very sad, for they explained much that I had not previously comprehended in his troubled life. How he must have suffered!

"What a clever production 'Jerrold's Magazine' is, and how admirable are his own contributions! Such writings *must* effect good.

"Very sincerely yours,

"M. BLESSINGTON."

The following little bit of domestic history refers to a matter (the relinquishment of her house in St. James's Square by the Wyndham Club) which reduced Lady Blessington's income by five hundred a year. It may be here proper to remark that nothing could be more erroneous than the impressions which generally prevailed as to the supposed extravagance of Lady Blessington in her equipage, domestic arrangements, &c. There were few

more careful or methodical housekeepers, and probably no one ever made a given income go further than she did,—not to mention the constant literary industry she employed in increasing it.

THE COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Gore House, Saturday, April 15.

"MY DEAR MR. PATMORE,—The house in St. James's Square has been resigned by me to the executors of Lord Blessington, Messrs. Norman and Worthington, North Frederick Street, Dublin. They may be written to. Another party is in treaty for the house—a Sir W. Boyd; so that if your friend wishes to secure it, no time should be lost. There are about four years of the lease to expire. The rent paid for the house is 840*l.* a year, unfurnished and exclusive of taxes. The Wyndham Club paid 1350*l.* for it furnished. The furniture is now in a bad state, and the executors would let it either with or without the furniture, for the whole term, for little more than the rent they pay.

"I regret exceedingly to hear that you

have been unwell, and shall have great pleasure in an opportunity of judging that your health is quite re-established, whenever you have time to call at Gore House.

"Believe me, dear Mr. Patmore,

"Very sincerely yours,

"M. BLESSINGTON."

V.

THE HABITUÉS OF SEAMORE PLACE AND GORE HOUSE.—THE COUNTESS G——.—DUC AND DUCHESSE DE GUICHE.—BARON D'HAUSSEZ.—COUNT D'ORSAY.—EMPEROR LOUIS NAPOLEON.

In recalling to mind the remarkable persons I have met at the house of Lady Blessington, the most celebrated is the Countess G——, with whom Lady Blessington became intimate after the death of Byron, and maintained a continued correspondence with her. Madame G—— was still very handsome at the time I met her at Seamore Place —I think in 1832-3; but she by no means gave me the impression of a person with whom Byron would be likely to fall in love; and her conversation (for I was specially introduced to her) was quite as little of a character to strike or interest a man so little tolerant of the commonplaces of society as Byron. To see and converse with the Countess G—— was, in fact, to be satisfied that all Byron's share in the pa

has become so famous as to render no excuse necessary for this allusion to it, was merely a passive permitting himself to be loved—a condition of mind which, after all, is perhaps the happiest and most salutary effect of woman's love, upon men like Byron. And it seems to have been specially so in Byron's case; for the period in which the G—— family lived under his roof was the only one in the whole of his recorded career to which his friends and admirers can look back with feelings even approaching to satisfaction and respect.

I remember calling on Lady Blessington one day when she had just received a long letter from Madame G——, a considerable portion of which she read to me, as being singularly characteristic of Italian notions of the *proprieties* of social life. The letter was written apropos to some strictures which had appeared in an English journal, on the impropriety or immorality of the *liaison* between Madame G—— and Byron, and on the fact of the father and brother of the lady having resided in the same house with the lovers. The peculiarity of Madame

G—— letter was the earnest, and at the same time perfectly *naive* and artless way in which she contended that the main point of the charge against her in the English journal was precisely that on which she rested her entire exculpation from either sin or blame. And she went on to declare, in the most solemn manner, that she had never passed a night under Byron's roof *that was not sanctioned by the presence of her father and brother*. She concluded by earnestly begging Lady Blessington to defend her character from the attacks in question, on the special ground of the fact just cited!

Among the other remarkable persons whom I met at Lady Blessington's about this period were the Duc and Duchesse de Guiche (now Duc and Duchesse de Grammont) and the Baron d'Haussez; the two former the chief persons of the household of Charles X. and his family, and the latter one of his ministers at the period of the famous Ordonnance.

The Duchesse de Guiche was extremely beautiful, and of that class of beauty the rarity of which in France makes it even

more esteemed than with us, where it is much less uncommon: a blonde, with blue eyes, fair hair, a majestic figure, an exquisite complexion, and in manner the model of a high-born and high-bred French woman. She is a daughter of the late General and Comtesse D'Orsay.*

Baron D'Haussez, the Minister of Marine

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* The late Duke de Grammont was, during the reign of the Bourbons, a captain of one of the companies of the Gardes du Corp, and Lieutenant-General. He did not appear to have inherited any of that gaieté de cœur and that happy spirit of social enjoyment which one naturally associates with the name of Grammont. His air and deportment were grave almost to severity; his manners and tone of mind were evidently tinctured by the sufferings and cruelties that his family had endured during the first Revolution. Horace Walpole has drawn the character of his mother, the Duchesse de Grammont, in no very favourable colours. Yet she displayed a spirit and courage amounting to heroism when she was dragged before the bloody tribunal of the Revolution. She was the sister of the famous Duc de Choiseul, and is believed to have exercised more influence over him, during his ministry, than any of his contemporaries.

The Duc de Guiche (now Duc de Grammont) served with distinction in the English army in the Peninsula, as Captain in the 10th Hussars. He is a descendant of *la belle Corisande.*

of Charles X., gave one the idea of anything but a minister of state. He was a plain, good-humoured, easy-going person, with little of his country's vivacity, much appearance of *bonhommie*, and altogether more English than French in manner and temperament.

Another of the more recent *habitués* of Gore House was Prince (now the Emperor) Louis Napoleon, who, after his elevation to power, treated Lady Blessington with marked distinction, and whose favour, together with her family connexion and long intimacy with several of the heads of the oldest and noblest families of France, would, had she lived, have given to her a position in the social circles of Paris even more brilliant than that which she had so long held in London.

But by far the most remarkable person I was accustomed to meet at Lady Blessington's was the late Count D'Orsay, brother to the above-named Duchesse de Guiche (now Duchesse de Grammont) and uncle to the present Duc de Guiche.

This accomplished nobleman and gentleman, and truly distinguished man, was for so long a period of his life "the observed of all

observers" in this country, that a brief Recollection of him will perhaps not be thought inappropriate to these pages,—especially as I do not believe that any detailed notice of him has been given to the world, either here or in his native country, France, since his death.

It is a singular fact that many of the most remarkable men of recent times—those men who have exercised the most extensive influence over the social, political, and literary condition and institutions of the country to which they have attached themselves—have been strangers to that country—foreigners in the strictest sense of the phrase—in birth, in education, in physical temperament, in manners, in general tone and turn of mind—in all things,—even in personal appearance. And this has been especially the case in France. The most remarkable minister France ever had (Mazarin) was an Italian;—her two most remarkable writers, male and female, Rousseau and De Stael, were Genevese;—her most remarkable actor (Talma) was (by birth at least) an Englishman;—her most remarkable soldier, statesman, and mo-

narch—not three, but one—was a Corsican; —and the consummate man who promises to be almost as remarkable as his illustrious relative, and has already done nearly as much good to France as *he* did, without any of the counterbalancing mischief, is Corsican by his father's side and Italian by his mother's.

The remark is perhaps less true of England than of any other European nation;—but this only makes it the more worthy of record that the most remarkable man of that country, during an entire twenty years, so far as regards that important department of a nation's habits and institutions which affect the immediate well-being and personal feelings of the great body of its cultivated classes—namely, the *social* condition and manners of these classes—was a foreigner; and not only a foreigner, but a Frenchman—born, educated, and bred up to manhood in that country between whose manners and modes of thought and feeling, and those of England, there has ever been a greater amount of difference and dissimilarity than between those of any other two civilized people under the sun. This fact is no less

worthy of note by Frenchmen than it is by the denizens of that nation for whose mingled amusement and information these sketches are more especially intended; and it is no less creditable to one people than to the other;—to the one, for having produced the all-accomplished person whose Portrait I am about to sketch;—to the other, for having appreciated his remarkable qualities, and permitted them to exercise their just and natural influence, in spite of the most rooted prejudices, and in the face of other circumstances singularly adverse to the sort of influence in question.

It used to be the fashion in England to describe George the Fourth as "the finest gentleman in Europe;" and the rest of the world seemed half inclined to admit the claim!—George the Fourth,—who is now pretty generally allowed (even in England) to have been little better, at his best, than a graceful and good-tempered voluptuary; a shallow egotist while young, a heartless debauchee when old, and at all times, young or old, an exacting yet faithless friend, a bitter and implacable enemy, a

harsh and indifferent father, a cruel and tyrannical husband, and, as an occupant of the supreme station to which he was called, only praiseworthy as having the good sense to bear in mind that he was the ruler not of Russia but of England.

Such thirty years ago was England's beau-ideal of that highest and noblest phase of the human character, "a gentleman." She has learned better since, and it is by a Frenchman that the lesson has been taught her; and if now asked to point to the finest gentleman Europe has known since the days of our own Sidneys, Herberts, Peterboroughs, &c., she would with one accord turn to no other than the Count D'Orsay,—though he had nothing better to show for the distinction than his perfect manner, his noble person, his varied accomplishments, and his universal popularity, no less with his own sex than with that which is best qualified to appreciate the character in question.

It was the singular good fortune of Count D'Orsay—or rather let us call it his singular merit, for it has arisen solely from the rare qualities and endowments of his mind

and heart—to be the chosen friend and companion of the finest wits and the ripest and profoundest scholars of his day, while all the idler portion of the world were looking to him merely as

"The glass of fashion, and the mould of form."

He was the favourite associate, on terms of perfect intellectual equality, of a Byron, a Bulwer, and a Landor; and, at the same time, the oracle, in dress and every other species of dandyism, of a Chesterfield, a Pembroke, and a Wilton.

I have heard one of the most distinguished of English *littérateurs* declare that the most profound and enlightened remarks he ever met with on the battle of Waterloo were contained in a familiar letter from the Count D'Orsay to one of his friends; and of this there can be no dispute—that incomparably the finest effigies which have yet been produced of the two heroes of that mighty contest are from the hand of Count d'Orsay. His equestrian statues of Napoleon and Wellington, small as they are, are admitted by all true judges to be among the finest works of art of modern times.

In the sister art, of painting, Count D'Orsay's successes were no less remarkable. His portrait of the most intellectual Englishman of his time, Lord Lyndhurst, is the most intellectual work of its class that has appeared since the death of the late President of the Royal Academy; and there is scarcely a living celebrity in the worlds of politics, of literature, of art, or of fashion, respectively, of whom Count D'Orsay has not sketched the most characteristic likeness extant. Most of these latter were confined to the portfolio of the late Lady Blessington, and are therefore only known to the favoured habitués of Gore House. But as those habitués included all that was distinguished in taste and dilettanti-ism, their fiat on such matters is final; and it is such as I have described.*

But this "Admirable Crichton" of the nineteenth century was, like his prototype just named, no less remarkable for personal gifts and accomplishments than he was for those which are usually attributed to intellectual qualities; though many of them

* Fac-similes of many of these portraits have been published by Mitchell, Bond-street.

depend more on bodily conformation than the pride of intellect will allow us to admit. Count D'Orsay was one of the very best riders in a country whose riders are admitted to be the best in the world; he was one of the keenest and most accomplished sportsmen in a nation whose sporting supremacy is the only undisputed one they possess; he was the best judge of a horse among a people of horse-dealers and horse-jockeys; he was among the best cricketers in a country where all are cricketers, and where alone that noblest of games exists; he was the best swimmer, the best shot, the best swordsman, the best boxer, the best wrestler, the best tennis-player; and he was admitted to be the best judge and umpire in all these amusements.

To crown his personal gifts and accomplishments, Count D'Orsay was incomparably the handsomest man of his time; and, what is still more remarkable, he retained this distinction for five-and-twenty years—uniting to a figure scarcely inferior in the perfection of its form to that of the Apollo, a head and face that blended the grace and dignity of the Antinous with the beaming

intellect of the younger Bacchus, and the almost feminine softness and beauty of the Ganymede.

The position which Count D'Orsay held in the *haute monde* of London society, for more than twenty years, is such as was rarely held, at any other time, by any other person in this country; and this in spite of such peculiar and numerous disadvantages as no other man ever attempted to overcome, much less succeeded. In the first place he was, as we have seen, a Frenchman born and bred; and he never changed or repudiated the habits and manners of his native country, or in any way warped or adapted them to those of the people among whom he had nevertheless become naturalized. He spoke English with a strong French accent and idiom, and, I verily believe, would not have got rid of these if he could; his tone of thinking and feeling, and all the general habits of his mind, were French; the style of his dress, of his equipages, of his personal appearance and bearing, were all essentially and eminently French.

In the next place, with tastes and personal

habits magnificent and generous even to a fault, Count D'Orsay was very far from being rich; consequently, at every step, he was obliged to tread upon some of the shopkeeping prejudices of English life. Unlike most of the denizens of this "nation of shopkeepers," he very wisely looked upon a tradesman as a being born to give credit, but who never does fulfil that part of his calling if he can help it, except where he believes that it will conduct him, if not to payment, at least to profit. The fashionable tradesmen of London knew that to be patronized by Count D'Orsay was a fortune to them; and yet they had the face to expect that he would pay their bills after they had run for a "reasonable" period, whether it suited his convenience to do so or not! As if, by rights, he ought to have paid them at all, or as if *they* ought not to have paid *him* for showering fortune on them by his smile, if it had not been that his honour would have forbidden such an arrangement, even with "a nation of shopkeepers!" Nay, I believe they sometimes perpetrated the mingled injustice and stupidity of invoking the law to their aid, and arresting him! Shutting up within

four walls the man whose going forth was the signal for all the rest of the world to think of opening their purse-strings, to compass something or other which they beheld in that mirror of all fashionable requirements! It was a little fortune to his tiger to tell the would-be dandies dwelling north of Oxford-street where D'Orsay bought his last new cab-horse, or who built his tilbury or his coat; and yet it is said that his horse-dealer, his coachmaker, and his tailor have been known to shut up from sight this type and model by which all the male "nobility and gentry" of London horsed, equipaged, and attired themselves!

Another of the great disadvantages against which Count D'Orsay had to contend, during his whole life, was the peculiarity of his social position. And these social disadvantages and anomalies acted with tenfold force in a country where the pretences to moral purity are in an inverse ratio to the practice. It will scarcely be disputed that London is, at this present writing, not merely the most immoral, but the most openly and indecently immoral capital in Europe. Things not only

happen every day in England, but are every day recorded there for the amusement and information of the breakfast-tables where sit her matrons and maidens, that not only do not and could not happen elsewhere, but could not be put into words if they did. And yet in England it was that because Count D'Orsay, while a mere boy, made the fatal mistake of marrying one beautiful woman, while he was, without daring to confess it even to himself, madly devoted to another still more beautiful, whom he could not marry—because, I say, under these circumstances, and discovering his fatal error when too late, he separated himself from his wife almost at the church door, he was, during the greater part of his social career in England, cut off from the advantages of the more fastidious portion of high female society by the indignant fiat of its heads and leaders. And this was in England, where people who can afford it change wives with each other by Act of Parliament, giving and receiving the estimated difference of the value of the article in pounds sterling! And

where such an arrangement does not necessarily preclude even the female parties to it from enjoying the social privileges of their class, and does not at all affect the males! In England!—where no married man in high life is thought the worse of, or treated the worse, even by the female friends of his wife, for being suspected of having a mistress or two. In England!—where every *unmarried* man in high life is compelled to keep a mistress whether he likes it or not, unless he would put his character in jeopardy!

If the explanation of this apparent anomaly in the case of Count D'Orsay be asked, all that can be replied is, that his supposed conduct under the difficult circumstances in which he found himself was not exactly *selon les règles* of English society. Moreover, if he really did commit a breach of these rules (which, by the bye, half the world, and they by no means the worst-informed half, did not believe), the scandal of a tacit avowal of the breach was studiously and successfully avoided; which is a great

crime in England, where you may be as immoral as you please, provided you show no signs of being ashamed of it.

I will conclude these Recollections of Count D'Orsay by some characteristic remarks, from a letter given me by Lady Blessington, relative to the Count's portrait of Lord Byron, which forms the frontispiece to her "Conversations" with the noble poet, and had previously appeared in the New Monthly Magazine, where the "Conversations" were first published. As this is, I believe, the only passage of Count D'Orsay's writing that has ever been made public, I shall give it in the original French.

"Le portrait de Lord Byron, dans le dernier numéro du 'New Monthly Magazine,' a attiré sur lui des attaques sans nombre—et pourquoi? Parcequ'il ne coïncide pas exactement avec les idées exagerées de MM. les Romantiques, qui finiront, je pense, par faire de Thomas Moore un géant, pourvu qu'ils restent quelque temps sans le voir. Il est difficile, je pense, de satisfaire le public, surtout lorsqu'il est décidé à ne croire un portrait ressemblant qu'autant qu'il rivalise d'ex-

agération avec l'idée qu'il se forme d'un sujet ; et si jusqu'à ce jour les portraits publiés de Lord Byron sont passés sains et saufs d'attaque, c'est que l'artiste ne s'étoit attaché qu'à faire un beau tableau, auquel son sujet ne ressembloit qu'un peu. Redresser l'esprit du public sur la réelle apparence de Lord Byron est sans contredit plus difficile à faire, qu'à prouver que le meilleur compliment que sa mémoire ait reçue, est la conviction intime que l'on a, qu'il devoit être d'un beau idéal, pour marcher de front avec ses ouvrages ; ainsi rien moins qu'une perfection n'est capable de satisfaire le public littéraire. Il n'en est pas moins vrai que les deux seuls portraits véridiques de Lord Byron présentés jusqu'à ce jour au public, sont celui en tête de l'ouvrage de Leigh Hunt, et celui du 'New Monthly.' Qu'ils satisfassent, ou non, la présente génération d'enthousiastes, peu importe, car trop généralement elle est influencé par des motifs secondaires. On trouve dans ce moment des parents de Lord Byron qui se gendarment à l'idée, qu'on le decrive montant à cheval avec une veste de nankin brodé et des guêtres ; et qui ne peuvent digérer

qu'il soit représenté très maigre, lorsqu'il est plus que prouvé, que personne n'étoit aussi maigre que lui en 1823 à Gênes. Le fait est qu'il paroit qu'au lieu de regarder les poëtes avec les yeux, il faut pour le moins des verres grossissants, ou des prismes si particuliers qu'on auroit de la peine à se les procurer. C'est pour cette raison qu'il est probable que l'auteur de l'Esquisse regrette de s'en être rapporté à ses propres yeux, et d'avoir satisfait toutes les connoissances présentes de Lord Byron, qui ont alors si maladroitement intercédés pour la publication de cette triste et infortunée esquisse, qui rend le 'Court Journal' et tant d'autres inconsolables."

Lady Blessington died suddenly at Paris on June 4, 1849, while in the (supposed) enjoyment of her usual health and spirits. She had dined, the day before, with her friend the Duchesse de Grammont, and a few days previously with Prince Louis Napoleon at the Elysée Bourbon.

Feeling unwell on the morning of the day

of her death, she sent for a physician, who was a homœopathist, and as her attack was one which demanded instant and vigorous measures, she was, like poor Malibran under similar circumstances, lost to that world to which she had administered so much pleasure and instruction. Only two or three days before her death, she had completed the furnishing of her new residence (Rue du Cercle), and had removed into it, and all the gay world of Paris were looking with anxiety for the commencement of her *réunions*.

The following list comprises, I believe, the whole of Lady Blessington's published writings, with the exception of Magazine Papers, and her contributions to her own annuals, the "Keepsake" and the "Book of Beauty:"

"The Magic Lantern," "A Tour in the Netherlands," "Desultory Thoughts," "The Idler in Italy," "The Idler in France," "Conversations with Lord Byron," "The Confessions of an Elderly Lady," "The Confessions of an Elderly Gentleman," "The

Governess," "Grace Cassidy," "The Two Friends," "The Victims of Society," "Meredith," "The Lottery of Life," "The Belle of a Season," and "Strathern." Several of the latter works are novels in three volumes.

R. PLUMER WARD.

R. PLUMER WARD.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE commencement of my literary intercourse with the author of "Tremaine" was immediately antecedent to the commencement of his own literary career in 1824; and as that intercourse speedily led to a personal intimacy and correspondence, which lasted, nearly without intermission, till his death in 1846, and therefore included the whole of the most remarkable phase of his remarkable life, I do not suppose any apology will be expected from me for the extent to which the following selections from my correspondence with Mr. Plumer Ward will reach, as compared with those relating to the other subjects of these Memorials.

There is indeed a something (not easily to

be described) about the writings of Plumer Ward, which is calculated to excite, and, in point of fact, did and does excite, a stronger feeling of *personal* interest and curiosity as to the individual character of their author, than arises from almost any other similar productions of our own day.

This is, no doubt, the secret of that irresistible charm which those writings possess, for that large proportion of their readers who feel the quality to be a beauty and a benefit; and to such readers it cannot but be an acceptable service to show them that their instinctive feelings of personal sympathy and regard are not unfounded. And even by the critical few who look upon this quality in the writings of Plumer Ward in a different light, these Recollections will probably not be thought wholly worthless, as a contribution to the *personal* history of the literature of our time.

There is another reason why I have felt in some measure called upon to undertake the (to me) gratifying task in question. It is that, from accidental circumstances, hereafter to be explained so far as may be needful

to the purpose I have in view, there is, I have every reason to believe, no one else living who has equal means of satisfying that curiosity and interest which still prevail, and which will undoubtedly prevail still more hereafter, as to the *literary* life of Mr. Plumer Ward—that portion of his public life which will be remembered and dwelt upon with admiration and gratitude when his career as a politician shall long have been forgotten.

As the in many respects valuable and important work of Mr. Phipps touches very briefly on this branch of Mr. Ward's career,* it will, I think, be felt that, so far from its having (as might at first be supposed) pre-occupied the ground I propose to take in the following pages, it has but fitly and conveniently paved the way for them; it has, indeed, in some measure rendered them necessary, with the view to a more complete knowledge and appreciation of one of the most remarkable men of our day, and one whose writings have assuredly as good a chance of going down to posterity, and ranking among

* Out of 988 pages, his literary career scarcely occupies the odd 88.

English classics, as those of any one other who can be named in connexion with the same important department of our literature—not even excepting those of Walter Scott himself.

I will conclude these brief introductory remarks by observing, that there can perhaps scarcely be a more striking instance cited of the supremacy of literary over political pretensions in this country in the present day, than that of Mr. Plumer Ward. For nearly twenty years Mr. Ward occupied a position in the House of Commons and in political life, only second to those of the great leaders Pitt, Percival, and Liverpool, with whom he acted from the commencement to the close of his political career; his services in various high and important offices being ultimately rewarded by his Sovereign, at their voluntary close, by an ample and honourable provision. Yet when, after only two or three years of retirement from public life, he came before the world anonymously as "the Author of Tremaine," he derived more immediate distinction, and more lasting celebrity, from that one unlaborious result of his lettered leisure

(not to mention that personal gratification to which his correspondence will so pleasingly testify), than he had gathered from his share in the political triumphs of a career which included the unexampled successes of the Pitt and Percival ministries. And while all the world were anxious to testify their admiration and gratitude to the successful *writer*, not one in a thousand of these had ever heard of his name as the statesman and politician. So certain is it, that while all of us almost instinctively recognise the validity of the shrewd old statesman's sneer at the small amount of ability that usually goes to the governing of a great nation, nobody ventures to exclaim, "How little talent it takes to write a 'Waverly,' or a 'Tremaine!'"

But the utter inadequacy of political ambition, even in its best and most legitimate triumphs, to satisfy the yearnings of the human mind and heart, has been so beautifully and touchingly treated by Mr. Ward himself, in various parts of his works, that I should perhaps apologize for alluding to the subject here; and I should certainly have

abstained from doing so, but that the personal application of those writings (more or less) to the author's own political and social career, is little known to the general readers of his works, and will be most interestingly illustrated in the letters which are to follow.

II.

MY FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE AUTHOR OF "TREMAINE" AND "DE VERE."

It is, I believe, pretty generally thought and said, that the authors of remarkable works are rarely answerable to the personal impressions of them created by their books. I have had unusual opportunities of judging on this point, and have seldom found the prevalent notion to be the true one; and I never found it so little true as in the case of the author of "Tremaine" and "De Vere."

It would not be consistent with the object of these pages to inquire *what* are the personal impressions likely to be created in regard to their author by the perusal of those two celebrated works.* But I think it may be generally felt by their readers, that

* At the period about to be referred to he had written those two works only.

other works of recent times, unless it be those of Byron, do, in point of fact, create so many and such strong, specific, and lasting impressions, of the kind in question, and at the same time so earnest a desire to test and realize them. At any rate, such had been their effect in my own case; and an anonymous epistolary intercourse with their anonymous author, on literary matters, had greatly increased and confirmed the vividness and individuality of those impressions. The result was that for the first time in my life (for Byron had, in my case, been no exception) I felt that strong interest and curiosity as to the personal qualities and characteristics of a *living* writer, which lovers of books, and especially those who live in them, as I do, are so apt to confine to writers who have ceased to exist. And this salutary interest and curiosity (for such I think they will always be found to be) were anything but repressed by the belief that, in the present instance, they could never be gratified. For Mr. Ward's secret was, for a considerable time, even more carefully and successfully guarded than that of the Great Unknown

himself; and I had reason to believe that, at the period I am now speaking of (just after the publication of "De Vere"), he had no intention of allowing it to be formally disclosed—at least during his lifetime.

Not long after the publication of "De Vere," however, Mr. Plumer Ward changed his determination of remaining anonymous, and his first *direct* communication to me was signed with his own name—all our previous literary intercourse having taken place anonymously on both sides, and through the medium of his publisher.

Shortly after this Mr. Ward suffered a fearful domestic calamity, in the loss (within two or three days of each other) of two beloved and accomplished daughters—the joint models, as it was understood, of his exquisite Georgina, in "Tremaine." This wholly incapacitated him for all social intercourse for a long period; and as, during the next two or three years, he wrote nothing, I had given up all expectation of any further communication with him, when, in the summer of 1831, while staying in Hertfordshire, at a few miles' distance from his beau-

tiful seat in that county, a mutual friend, residing in the neighbourhood, intimated to me that Mr. Ward, on hearing my name accidentally mentioned, had expressed a wish to be introduced to me; and my friend proposed that I should accompany him to Gilston Park the next day.

At length, then, the moment was unexpectedly at hand that would enable me, if I chose, to solve the problem about which I had felt so much interest; and I confess that I prepared myself for an entire and blank disappointment; for the mutual acquaintance who was about to introduce me to Mr. Ward seemed to see in him nothing materially different from what he was accustomed to meet with in persons moving in the same station of life. Mr. Plumer Ward made, I was assured, an exemplary high sheriff of the county,* an unexceptionable magistrate, a model landlord, a pattern patron of race balls and archery meetings, and was, in brief, the beau-ideal of an English country gentleman and a lord of acres, of the old school.

* Mr. Ward held this office during the year referred to.

This was very well in its way, but it was not what I looked for and desired in the author of "Tremaine" and "De Vere;" and, as I had little inclination to get rid of the *ideal* I had formed for myself in the latter regard, I should certainly have avoided the proposed introduction if I could have done so without showing that such was my desire. But this was impossible, and the next day we drove over to Gilston.

Our first personal interview with distinguished men about whom we have long felt a strong interest and curiosity, invariably impresses itself upon the mind and memory more vividly than do any subsequent details of our intercourse with them, however marked or memorable the latter may have been. And such was especially the case in regard to my first introduction to Mr. Plumer Ward at Gilston Park. The man himself, and the immediate adjuncts and accessories of the picture which his first personal appearance before me presented, stand out on my memory as if they were of yesterday; while all the collateral incidents and objects connected with the visit recede into a misty and indistinct

distance. Had I not afterwards grown familiar with the many beauties of Gilston, I should, notwithstanding the singular charm of several of them, and the striking and impressive character of others, have overlooked or forgotten them all as entirely as if they had never passed before my sight. But the tall, slim, distinguished, and somewhat stately figure of the chief personage of the picture, as it slowly advanced towards me, step by step, up the long drawing-room, attired (very carefully, as it struck me at the time) in deep mourning, slightly bent by illness, and leaning painfully on the arms of two tall liveried attendants, also in deep mourning, lives before me at this moment, all alone, like the central group of a consummate picture, seen from precisely that point of view at which all the other features are intended by the artist to merge in the indistinct haze of a general effect.

As it is my desire to mix as little as possible with these reminiscences of Mr. Plumer Ward anything but that which immediately or incidentally relates to himself personally, I shall not dwell on this, my first interview with him, further than to say that, after the

first glance which his astonishingly keen and hawklike eyes had cast upon me, the slight tinge of haughtiness which marked his usual bearing on the first *abord,* passed entirely away (never again to return for me); that our mutual introducer being present, the conversation was confined to the ordinary topics of the day; that on our taking leave, Mr. Ward made me promise to return on the morrow, and pass a few days at Gilston; and that, from that morrow commenced between us an intimacy which speedily ripened into a confiding friendship on his part, and an admiring and affectionate esteem and respect on mine, which were never once disturbed or interrupted during the remainder of his life.

III.

GILSTON—ITS ANTIQUARIAN AND PICTORIAL TREASURES DESCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR OF "TREMAINE."

THE two following notes mark the commencement of my miscellaneous correspondence with Mr. Ward. They belong to the period immediately succeeding my first personal introduction to him, as described in the preceding section. Brief and slight as they are, I think it well to put them on record here, because they denote that frank and cordial "spirit of human dealing" which caused the master of Gilston to be as much beloved by the meanest hind on his estate, as he was by his most intimate personal friends and associates. It was this tone and spirit of social equality, and the charming *abandon* with which he yielded himself up to it, that constituted the fascination (for it was nothing less) of his society—causing every one with whom he spoke to believe (because

in fact it was for the time being true) that he felt almost as strong an interest in them and their affairs as they did themselves—perhaps the rarest and most immediately gratifying of all the results of social intercourse.

When I add that these notes were written in reply to self-invitations from a man who had seen his correspondent but once, and had moreover for years past encouraged himself in an almost morbid shrinking from all new acquaintanceship, it will be felt that they show (by *reflection*) the vivid and vital nature of the characteristic in evidence of which I am alone induced to cite them.

It is true, the liberty I was thus tempted to take, in inviting myself to Gilston, was the result, not so much of the cordial welcome I received there, as of the peculiar footing on which its owner, at our first personal meeting, had chosen to place our future intercourse, by making me promise that I would go to Gilston as often as I could, without waiting for formal invitations; only stipulating that I should not risk a five-and-twenty miles' ride without letting him know

a day or two beforehand when I was coming. I must also remind the reader that, although our personal acquaintance was so recent, our epistolary intercourse had been intimate and confidential during the previous three years.

I trust the reader will pardon the foregoing egotism, in favour of the motive which called it forth. He may be assured that if I could have devised any other effectual means of setting forth the peculiar feature I desired to illustrate, of the intellectual portrait I have undertaken to paint in these pages, I would have adopted it in preference to citing letters which can have no value but the one in question, to any but him to whom they were addressed. It will, however, be found, I think, that in this latter respect they stand alone in the correspondence of which they form a part.

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Gilston, June 24-31.

"MY DEAR SIR,—At the dinner-table it has just occurred to me that you might wish, at all events, to have an answer to your welcome letter, so I steal a moment to tell you

we have no engagement, and shall be delighted to see you on Thursday, when I will send for you to Harlow. My lawyer says indeed it may be possible that he may send for me to town to-morrow. But if he does, I will let you know my motions before the evening, in Heathcote Street. If you don't hear, count upon my being at home, and I need not say glad to see you.

"Much yours,

"R. P. W."

R. PLUMER WARD TO P. G. PATMORE.

"Gilston Park, Dec. 14-31.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am favoured with your flattering and (why should I deny it?) your gratifying letter. Whatever I have seen of you makes your good opinion very welcome, and I have pleasure in thinking of your kindness. You may suppose, therefore, that your liking to Gilston is very agreeable, and that the oftener you favour us with a visit, the more we shall be pleased. I shall certainly be at home on Sunday, and ready to receive you, but hope you will stay all night;

and pray don't bring your dandy blackings —those enemies to picturesque walks! . .

"Adieu au revoir, and believe me

"Much yours,

"R. PLUMER WARD."

Having thus introduced the reader personally to "the author of Tremaine," I cannot do better than give to the sketch its fitting "local habitation,"—which I am fortunately enabled to do in the words of Mr. Plumer Ward himself. The following graphic descriptions of Gilston and its antiquarian and pictorial treasures were written and sent to me, upon a hint which I happened to drop, in one of the visits referred to in the foregoing notes, of my intention to describe in print some of the great old country seats (Gilston among them) in which England, and especially the metropolitan counties, is so rich.

In sending me the following description Mr. Ward says characteristically, in reference to the minuteness of some of its antiquarian details,—"But you have mounted me upon my hobby, and you see he has run away with

me. My excuse is, Horace Walpole would have been worse had you put him upon Strawberry Hill."

Yes—and with infinitely less excuse; for Strawberry Hill was to Gilston Park something like what a London cit's Italian villa on Clapham Common is to Chatsworth, or a half-pay sea captain's be-flagged and be-battlemented cabin in the Greenwich Road is to Windsor Castle.

"Gilston Park, Dec. 19, 1831.

"The Court Yard is of ample dimensions, where a troop of yeomanry could manœuvre, and have often paraded. In two parts it is bounded by the house; on another, flanked by the stables, screened by trees; on the fourth, by an old-fashioned wall and massive iron gates, between stone pillars, crowned with urns and pines, fruit, flowers, and heads of satyrs.

"In niches in the walls the statue of Cardinal Wolsey, in his robes and hat, and the busts of Charles 1st and Lord Bacon; size of life.

"A very ancient door, studded with iron,

leads to the offices, and an ample gate, of black carved oak, filling a Gothic arch twelve feet high, with a latch of ponderous brass, opens into the Outer Hall of the mansion. Above this door is the helmet and vizor of a knight, cut in stone, and the arms of the present, and several of the ancient possessors of the place.

"The Outer Hall is near thirty feet square, and twenty high, with a cross-beam of oak, in the middle of the ceiling. The sides are lined with oak, in small panels, of a very bright hue, to the height of seven feet; afterwards, up to the ceiling, a white wall; but so covered with arms and armour of different ages; pikes, halberts, cross-bows, plaited and twisted coats of mail, shields, helmets, and maces; tilting lances, matchlocks, horse armour, and, (approaching to modern times,) carbines, bayonets, and pistols, that, together with numerous coats of arms, pedigrees, and family and other pictures, scarce any part of the walls can be discovered.

"The principal features, however, are a most massive and ponderous oak staircase and

gallery, of the taste of the olden time; an equally old chimney of the widest dimensions, composed of marble, and a mantelpiece of black oak, boldly carved into representations of a dolphin race, a stag chase, and a boar hunt, with appropriate figures. Over the whole a quaint motto, in gold letters, 'Patriæ fumus, Igne Alieno, Luculentior.' Within, blazes a Christmas log, on the dogues formerly belonging to Sir Ralph Sadleir.

"Then come ancient chests, inlaid with different coloured woods; upon one of which stands a crucifix, between two ponderous brass candlesticks, with almost still more ponderous wax candles, not far from the resemblance of a Roman-catholic altar.

"In another part, the famous ballad of the 'Old Courtier of the Queen,' in ancient type, and a broad tapestry and tortoiseshell frame, which seems to have come out of the dressing-room of the Queen herself.

"But chief of all is a large casement window, some ten feet square, entirely covered with glowing painted glass, blazing with the arms of the ancient possessors of Gilston; as

a key to which there is the following inscription:—

"'Ceux sont les armouries quis porteroient autrefois magnifuiques Princes, nobles Barons et gentilz chevalirs, adonques Seigneurs des beaux fiefs de Gilston, Standon, et Eastwick.'

"Among these are the Mandevilles, De Veres, Mowbrays, De Rooses, Giffards, Fitz Gilberts, Joan of Acre, daughter of Edward I., the De Burghs, Lionel Duke of Clarence, Mortimer, and Beauchamp, all of them ancestors of the present possessor's children and grandchildren. Among these, too, are the arms of Hugh Blount and Sir Thomas De Swinburne, great ancestors of my son's family, who were sheriffs of this county as far back as 1286 and 1403.

"There is a scroll under the arms of Sir Thomas, stating that he was mayor of Bordeaux and chaptal of Fronsac, in Guienne; 'par sa mère, noble Boutetourte, par sa grande mère, noble de Montfichet.' Many panes are serried with very emblematic Plantagenista in pod.

"But the greatest relics in this interesting

hall, are the helmets and various swords of the renowned Sir Ralph Sadleir, who once possessed some of the estate, and which were removed from his old castle, about ten miles off.

"But, above all, a most valuable trophy, is the pole of the Royal Standard of Scotland, eighteen feet high, taken by Sir Ralph's own hand at the battle of Musselborough, in the time of Edward VI.

"Over head are the casque, crest, and pennon bearing his arms, of Sir John Gore, lord of Gilston, and sheriff of Herts in 1624. The only thing of modern times, but we hope not less interesting, are the colours of the present Gilston Troop of Yeomanry, who, their commander thinks, are quite worthy their ancestors.

"The pictures that line the staircase and opposite wall, are chiefly of ancestors; Cottons of Combermere; Mainwarings, of Cheshire and Shropshire, through whom a brilliant train of descents—Astons, Ratcliffs, and Smiths, baronets, of Hazeluyk Hall. One of the Ratcliffs is the famous Earl of Sussex, mentioned so beautifully by Scott, in

'Kenilworth,' as the rival of Leicester. One of the Smiths, a Sir John, in gold gloves, a sheriff of London in King James's time, frowns most grimly, seemingly on his lady, who receives it with a look compounded of exuberant fat and resignation.

"More elegant, and more interesting, is a fine copy of, perhaps, Vandyke's most splendid work, Charles I., with his noble horse, led by his equerry, and the Marquis of Hamilton (the late Mrs. Plumer Ward's ancestor) in the background; then, a good painting of Essex, the last of the Devauxes, the parliamentary general; and a fine whole-length of Sir Walter Raleigh and his son, by Zucchero. These, two of Elizabeth, Cardinal Wolsey, and Lord Arundel in needle-work by a Lady Aylesbury, finish the hall.

"On the right, and through a well-carved old door of oak, representing many Saxon kings, is the dining-room, thirty-six feet by twenty-two, set thickly round with pictures of the Plumers. The late Mr. Plumer, forty years M.P. for the county, by Lawrence; and the Countess of Abercorn, as a shepherdess. There are, mingled with many eminent states-

men, a fine original half-length of Lord Bolingbroke, bought by me of the late Lord Chetwynd. An interesting one of the first Lord Chatham, with the eyes of a hawk; a well-finished one of Sir William Wyndham, in his Chancellor of the Exchequer's robes; and a curious, because uncommon one, of "*downright* Shippen," add to the list, which, is crowned by perhaps the most strikingly characteristic likeness of Swift that ever was painted. It gives the very essence of his mind; his leering eye, and sardonic curl of lip would betray him to anybody, though his name were concealed.

"On trestles are the marble bust of Pitt, by Nollekens, and the beautiful one of Canning, by Chantry. The Duke of Wellington commands on the opposite side.

"I can no more to-day (Monday), but will send you the octagon hall, library, drawing-rooms, and exterior south front, to-morrow.

"R. P. W."

R. Plumer Ward to P. G. Patmore.

Gilston Park, Tuesday, Dec. 20, 1831.

"I forgot to mention in the catalogue of the Hall, what ought at least to be enumerated as belonging to the times—viz., the old oak table—a very plank, supported by barrel legs — which seemed to catch your fancy. It once belonged to Lord Fairfax, temp. C. I., but was *created* long before him.

"Then there are the portraits of Burleigh, the favourites Leicester and Essex, Sir P. Sidney, and Lord Cottington, all in the proper Spanish costume of those days. Add to these, a fine whole length of bonnie King Jamie, by Jansen, Henry VIII., and (the most modern of the crowned heads here admitted) King William, on a spirited horse, though looking himself, as he always did, very much *out* of spirits.

"The black oak door, so beautifully divided into wreaths and ribbons, with a crimson oval in the middle, on which is a patriarchal cross in studded brass, and leading from the great stairs to other apartments, must not be forgotten.

"The archway above is crowned with, what the old gentry were always fond of erecting in their halls, an immense carving of the Royal Arms and supporters, which, though now venerably dimmed, had once been splendidly gilt and painted. They were of the time of the first James, and have been in the house ever since. These, and some chairs, exquisite in ebony and ivory, and Genoa velvet cushions, conclude the list of furniture in the hall.

"Passing through a twin door with that which leads to the dining-room, we now enter a spacious room which, with all our fondness for Tudor recollections, I am afraid, though comparatively modern, must be acknowledged to be the finest thing in the place. It is called the Octagon Hall, composes a cube of thirty-six feet, ending at the top in a cupola. The ground on which it stands was, in fact, originally an open court, round which the old rooms were ranged, opening into one another. But this being thought cold and comfortless by the Plumer of a hundred years ago, he judiciously filled up the space with a building,

which, though incongruous with many other parts, is beautiful in itself, from its elegant proportions, and a Grecian decoration which is perfect.

"All round are niches, in which, and on trestles, are busts of the twelve Cæsars, as large, or perhaps larger, than life, in superb and spotless marble. In this hall lately sat down with ease to a very baronial dinner, one hundred and forty persons, composed of the Gilston yeomanry, officers and men, and many gentry of the neighbourhood.

"Passing through a door on the right, we are again gothicised, in a library thirty-six feet long, composed entirely of oak in panels; carved beams of the same; bay windows, full of family arms;—Suttons, Dudley, Charlton, Tiploft, the Seahouses and all their northern quarterings; Luice, Eaglefield, Ponsonby, Wharton, Huddleston, &c., with the appropriate motto of a border family of five hundred years,—'Væ Victis.'

"To the critical traveller, however, the object most worthy of observation in this room, is a chimney-piece of the most exact architecture of the Tudor times, and seem-

ingly three hundred years old. It is of oak of different colours, divided by rich pillars and obelisks, and inlaid with flowers; an immense and high-wrought rose forming the centre compartment.

"Below, inclosing the fire-place, are four bishops with their robes, croziers, books, and crucifixes, excellently carved in alabaster. They are evidently of the Roman Catholic times, and one of them a cardinal.

"There are here, and in a study contiguous, some five thousand volumes, and two relics, the answer of the University of Oxford to the Pope's bull excommunicating Henry VIII., sealed with the arms of all the colleges, and a rare *facsimile* of the letter to Lord Monteagle, which disclosed the Gunpowder Plot.

"Leaving this room for what is called the Den, you find yourself in the essence of cheerfulness. Windows, catching every ray of the sun, dancing on the water, and illuminating the park. A high and broad glass door down to the ground lets you into a conservatory, with all its sights and perfumes. In this Den are some of the owner's favourite

books—divinity, classics, many Shakspeares, many Horaces, many county histories, and gothic antiquities; plates of horsemanship, where 'Monseigneur le Marquis de Newcastle devant son Chateau de Bolsover, donne leçon.' There are also some valuable state papers, and books of reference; Montfaucon, Du Cange, Gesner, the various Encyclopedias, and much heraldry.

"Above the books are the pictures of some choice friends,—the late Sir Michael Stewart, the late Lord Mulgrave by Jackson, General Phipps by Hopner, and the owner's first lady.

"Returning through the Octagon Hall, we pass now through a vestibule, into the drawing-rooms, stopping on the way to look at Henry IV. in his breastplate and sash of command; a good picture, but rather too old for the stories told of him with the ladies.

"A pendant is his wife, Mary de Medicis, looking very ugly and jealous, and almost an excuse for Henry's inconstancies.

"Above is another foreign general, most markedly picturesque in face, beard, armour, and sashed arm,—the famous Spinola.

"A side wall is almost covered with a gigantic whole length of Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham,—a superb man, and a good painting, by Kneller. Opposite is Mistress Sedley, Countess of Dorchester, his mother-in-law.

"These, and a portrait of Hamilton, Earl of Haddington, who was blown up in Dunglas Castle by his English page, out of revenge for calling the English cowards (the page sharing the same fate), conduct you to the Salons de Compagnie.

"And here we take leave of the olden time entirely,—for all now is modern elegance. May I not pay that tribute to the taste of their late mistress? The walls are painted crimson, so like morocco leather that they may be taken, at first sight, for that commodity. They are bordered with broad scallops in gold, and have many portraits in bright gold carved frames. These, added to a profusion of China (of which Mrs. Plumer Ward was very fond), crimson damask curtains, and embossed silver vases; marble and scagliola tables, and much plate glass and japan cabinets; a noble organ, grand piano, and

harp, almost make us forget, or at least not regret, the times of the Virgin Queen.

"The pictures are, some of them, very good; most, or all of them, interesting. The best, perhaps, is a fine whole length of the first Duke of Hamilton by Jamieson, the Scotch Vandyck. He is in the black dress of the age,—a black cloak, only enlivened by the George and other insignia of the garter, and a white lace ruff.

"His father and grandfather, Marquesses of Hamilton, are near him, in appropriate costume. These Hamiltons are ancestors of Mrs. Plumer Ward.

"Then a half length of Charles II. in the robes of the garter, one of the truest of Sir Peter. Another, equally true, by the same painter, of a very beautiful, very young, and very pensive Charlotte Cotton, leaning her cheek upon her hand, that makes one in melancholy love with her. What adds to it is an inscription much obliterated, but legible. 'She was a pale primrose, that died unmarried.'

"Not so pensive, but perhaps still more exquisitely beautiful, is the whole length

of Henrietta Maria, if not by Vandyck, so like him, as to fill ladies with envy both of her face and of her gown.

"Leave her for the great picture of Mr. Pitt, by Hopner, and Lord Bolingbroke again, in his court dress of crimson velvet, and looking older than in his robes, but with a higher look of the man of quality he was.

"These furnish the principal drawing-room, which is thirty-six feet by twenty-four, and sixteen feet high. In the ante-room, leading to it through folding mahogany doors, are others, more modern worthies, —Fox, excellent, by Romney; Sheridan, not quite perfect, by Sir Joshua; a noble one of the late Mr. Plumer's father, by the same; Bishop Seth Ward (no relation though the same arms) in his robes of Chancellor of the Garter; a bad painting of Lord Lonsdale, and a worse of Mr. Percival, both preserved for the sake of personal esteem.

"I have now done what I feel I have made a very egotistical sketch, instead of the mere catalogue I intended. But you had mounted me on my hobby, and you see it has run

away with me. My excuse is, Walpole would have been worse if you had sat him upon Strawberry Hill. To make amends I will be brief on the

SOUTH FRONT.

"This rises on the margin of the lake, in quiet (I could almost say) majesty. On the opposite side a bank, somewhat steep, and crowned with trees, and the stems of trees of most grotesque shapes. In the distance, the woods and avenues of the park, with a whole army of deer, amounting to some hundreds.

"The building is perfectly Elizabethan. Innumerable gables and chimneys of the oldest time of that taste; turrets for clocks and weathercocks; statues and bust upon projecting corbeilles.

"Among the statues, those of Edward I. and his two queens, Eleanor of Castile, and Marguerite of France, by the first of whom came my son, by the second (mother of Thomas de Bartholomew), my daughter-in-law; by both my grand-children.

"The busts (being a Tudor house) are of the princes of that family.

"There are fifteen coats of arms in stone of the families who have possessed the place, and be sure De Vere and Mowbray are not forgotten. Seven of the earliest of these were lineal ancestors, from about seven hundred years ago, upwards.

"I must have done, but must first describe the porch, which is crowned with the bust of the Maiden Queen. Above it is the quaint inscription, 'Fear God, obaye the Rial Queen.' Below that, the epitaph in Camden—

'Spain's rod, Rome's ruin, Netherland's relief;
Earth's joy, England's gemme, World's wonder,
Nature's chief.'

"There are two side casements in this porch. In one, Elizabeth of York; in the other, the Red and White Rose, very large and glowing in painted glass. Adieu.

"R. P. W."

IV.

CHARLES LAMB AT GILSTON.

Before finally taking leave of Gilston, I must refer to an interesting circumstance connected with that beautiful old place, which has never been publicly noticed—at least, in connexion with its ownership by the author of "Tremaine" and "De Vere;" a circumstance, too, of which Plumer Ward himself was (I take it for granted) wholly ignorant, or he would certainly not have allowed himself to remain unacquainted (as I believe he was) with those exquisite writings which—it can scarcely be doubted—owed much of their character to the early associations arising out of that place of which he was (at least at the time I speak of) so fond.*

* The grievous domestic calamities which befel Mr. Ward during the latter part of his residence at Gilston (as alluded to in a subsequent page), caused him wisely to quit a spot suggestive of so many painful associations; and, after the death of his youngest and only remaining

The late Mr. Justice Talfourd, in his delightful Life and Letters of Charles Lamb, notices the fact of Lamb's maternal grandmother having been "for many years the housekeeper to the old and wealthy family of the Plumers, of Hertfordshire, by whom she was held in true esteem;"* and further on he gives a letter of Lamb to Southey, in which the writer speaks of having recently revisited those scenes of his infancy.† But

daughter, he resided, till within a few months of his own death, at Okeover Hall, in Staffordshire, the fine old place of Mr. Charles Okeover, his step-son, then a minor; and it is from thence that the most pleasing and characteristic of the following letters were dated.

* Sir T. N. Talfourd goes on to say—"His visits to their ancient mansion, where he had the free range of every apartment, gallery, and terraced walk, gave him 'a peep at the contrasting accidents of a great fortune,' and an alliance with that gentility of soul which to appreciate is to share. He has beautifully recorded his own recollections of this place in the Essay entitled, 'Blakesmoor in H——shire,' in which he modestly vindicates his claims to partake in the associations of ancestry not his own, and shows the true value of high lineage by detecting the spirit of noblenes which breathes around it, for the enkindling of generous affections, not only in those who may boast of its possession, but in all who can feel its influences."—*Talfourd's Life and Letters of Charles Lamb*, p. 12.

† "I have but just got your letter, being returned

neither Lamb nor his biographer anywhere mentions the name of the place itself—Gilston Park; nor does either seem to have been aware that, at least six years before Lamb's death, it had passed into the possession of one who, had he known Lamb and his writings, would have appreciated them both as fully and fondly as did the most earnest and enthusiastic of his friends and associates; and who, had he been aware of the associations connected in Lamb's mind with Gilston, would never have rested till he had welcomed as an honoured guest within its halls the noble and truly "gentle" spirit that had mused and sported there on suffer-

from Herts, where I have passed a few red-letter days with much pleasure. I would describe the county to you, as you have done by Devonshire, but, alas! I am a poor pen at that same. I could tell you of an old house with a tapestried bedroom, the 'Judgment of Solomon' composing one panel, and 'Actæon spying Diana naked' the other. I could tell of an old marble hall, with Hogarth's prints and the Roman Cæsars in marble. I could tell of a wilderness and of a village church, and where the bones of my honoured grandame lie. But there are feelings which refuse to be translated; sulky aborigines which will not be naturalized in another soil. Of this nature are old family faces and scenes of infancy."—*Talfourd's Life and Letters*, p. 81-2.

ance in childhood, in the poor garb of charity,* and (it may be) wept there, during a manhood that had become famous, over scenes and times the happiness of which was never to return.

The singular fact of all Lamb's friends (myself included) remaining ignorant till after his death, of associations that would certainly have excited an interest in every one of them, is probably to be accounted for by the strangely mystifying way in which he describes the supposed actual condition of the scenes in question, in his beautiful Eliaism entitled, "Blakesmoor, in H——shire," where he speaks of "the great old house" being lately "pulled down," and that "a few bricks only lay as representatives of that which was so stately and so spacious."†

* Lamb was brought up at Christ's Hospital.

† "Journeying northward lately, I could not resist going some few miles out of my road to look upon the remains of an old great house with which I had been impressed in this way in infancy. I was apprised that the owner of it had lately pulled it down; still I had a vague notion that it could not all have perished; that so much solidity with magnificence could not have been crushed all at once into the mere dust and rubbish which I found it.

"The work of ruin had proceeded with a swift hand

In what condition the old mansion house of Gilston may have been at the date (1821) of Elia's celebrated Essay, I know not; but when I first became acquainted with it (in 1831) nothing could be more perfect of its kind; and so it remains to the present day. In fact, on coming into possession of it, by

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indeed, and the demolition of a few weeks had reduced it to—an antiquity." * * *

"Had I seen these brick-and-mortar knaves at their process of destruction, at the plucking of every panel I should have felt the varlets at my heart. I should have cried out to them to spare a plank at least out of the cheerful store-room, in whose hot window-seat I used to sit and read Cowley, with the grass-plot before, and the hum and flappings of that one solitary wasp that ever haunted it about me—it is in mine ears now, as oft as summer returns: or a panel of the yellow-room.

"Why, every plank and panel of that house for me had magic in it. The tapestried bed-rooms—tapestry so much better than painting—not adorning merely, but peopling the wainscots—at which childhood ever and anon would steal a look, shifting its coverlid (replaced as quickly) to exercise its tender courage in a momentary eye-encounter with those stern bright visages, staring reciprocally—all Ovid on the walls, in colours vivider than his descriptions. Actæon in mid sprout, with the unappeasable prudery of Diana; and the still more provoking, and almost culinary coolness of Dan Phœbus, eel-fashion, deliberately divesting of Marsyas.

"Then, that haunted room—in which old Mrs. Battle died—whereinto I have crept, but always in the day-

his marriage with its widowed owner, Mr. Plumer Ward had *restored* it in every part and particular, with a scrupulous attention to its pristine character, and at an enormous expense: I think he told me between six and seven thousand pounds.

The following anecdote of Gilston, dating

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time, with a passion of fear; and a sneaking curiosity, terror-tainted, to hold communication with the past.—*How shall they build it up again?*

"It was an old deserted place, yet not so long deserted but that traces of the splendour of past inmates were everywhere apparent. Its furniture was still standing—even to the tarnished gilt leather battledores, and crumbling feathers of shuttlecocks in the nursery, which told that children had once played there. But I was a lonely child, and had the range at will of every apartment, knew every nook and corner, wondered and worshipped everywhere.

"The solitude of childhood is not so much the mother of thought, as it is the feeder of love, and silence, and admiration. So strange a passion for the place possessed me in those years, that, though there lay—I shame to say how few roods distant from the mansion—half hid by trees, what I judged some romantic lake, such was the spell which bound me to the house, and such my carefulness not to pass its strict and proper precincts, that the idle waters lay unexplored for me; and not till late in life, curiosity prevailing over elder devotion, I found, to my astonishment, a pretty brawling brook had been the Lacus Incognitus of my infancy. Variegated views, extensive prospects—and those at no great dis-

about the period of Lamb's boyish acquaintance with the place, was related to me by Mr. Plumer Ward on one of my visits there. The hero of it was "the last of the Plumers," who, at the time of his death, had been Member for the County for more

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tance from the house—I was told of such—what were they to me, being out of the boundaries of my Eden?—So far from a wish to roam, I would have drawn, methought, still closer the fences of my chosen prison; and have been hemmed in by a yet securer cincture of those excluding garden walls." * * *

"Mine was that gallery of good old family portraits, which as I have gone over, giving them in fancy my own family name, one—and then another—would seem to smile, reaching forward from the canvas, to recognise the new relationship; while the rest looked grave, as it seemed, at the vacancy in their dwelling, and thoughts of fled posterity.

"That Beauty with the cool blue pastoral drapery, and a lamb—that hung next the great bay window—with the bright yellow H——shire hair, and eye of watchet hue—so like my Alice!—I am persuaded she was a true Elia—Mildred Elia, I take it.

"Mine, too, BLAKESMOOR, was thy noble Marble Hall with its mosaic pavements, and its Twelve Cæsars—stately busts in marble—ranged round; of whose countenances, young reader of faces as I was, the frowning beauty of Nero, I remember, had most of my wonder; but the mild Galba had my love. There they stood in the coldness of death, yet freshness of immortality."—*The Last Essays of Elia*, 240—244.

than forty successive years, and was *doyen* of the House of Commons.

Mr. Plumer was riding with a friend in the neighbourhood of Gilston, when they met a well-to-do-looking man in the garb of a butcher, who stopped and saluted "the Squire" very respectfully, and was noticed cordially in return, as follows:—

"Ah, Dick—how are you? Why, I never see you at Gilston now, Dick. Why don't you come? You're always welcome there. I've a great respect for you, Dick. You're an excellent friend of mine (meaning in connexion with the election). Let's see you at Gilston. The cellar 's always open to you."

"Thank your honour, kindly," said Dick, and rode away.

Meeting the Squire's companion alone the next day, Dick addressed him thus—

"Why, Mister ——, Squire don't seem to know much about what be going on at Gilston. Why, I ha' got glorious drunk in servants' hall every night this last week."

This story was related to Mr. Ward by the gentleman who was the Squire's companion on the occasion.

V.

MR. WARD'S PERSONAL CHARACTER AS ILLUSTRATING AND ILLUSTRATED BY HIS WRITINGS.

BEFORE commencing the strictly chronological arrangement that I propose to observe throughout the remainder of this correspondence, relating to the literary life of Mr. Plumer Ward, it may be well to put down such other of my recollections of his personal and intellectual character, and his habits of thought and feeling, as may seem to point at and illustrate his published writings.

For those who looked at Mr. Plumer Ward as the author of "Tremaine" and "De Vere" (and few who knew him could help doing this after the publication of those works), there was something remarkably characteristic in his personal appearance, deportment, tone of voice, &c., at the time I have just referred to. Though considerably advanced in life (he was, I think, sixty-three

or four years of age), there was about his whole person and countenance a youthfulness of form, of deportment, of manner, and of intellectual expression, that was singularly pleasing and attractive; for there was a total absence of that discrepancy between the apparent and the actual age which is almost always present in those who *look* young without being so—a discrepancy that never fails to produce an unpleasant effect on the observer, often a painful or a ridiculous one.

As the present seems a fitting place to introduce all that I have to say further on this part of my subject, it must be understood that what follows applies, not merely to my first impressions, received on the occasion just alluded to, but generally to the whole of my intercourse with Mr. Plumer Ward, from the date of my first correspondence with him, in 1825, up to within a few days of his death, in 1846.

In Mr. Plumer Ward's personal appearance and demeanour the dignity and gravity of age were so sweetly and happily blended with the freshness of youth, and the warmth and vivacity of boyhood—I might almost

add, with the playfulness and simplicity of childhood—that each in turn seemed to be the prevailing and absorbing expression, without, however, in any manner displacing or disturbing the others.

I have never seen so thoroughly happy a temperament—a man of such truly "blest condition;" and this, whether the mood of his mind happened to be grave or gay; whether he was discussing the political changes of the time (so little palatable to his old high Tory habits, principles, and associations) with some retired statesman of his own standing, or the revolutions of fashion with some court beauty or oracle of the new era; whether soberly and sagely discussing and enjoying the poetry of Shakspeare and Milton (the two gods of his literary idolatry), or laughing good-naturedly at what he deemed the new-fangled theories and fantastical practices of Wordsworth or Tennyson, neither of whom I could ever persuade him to read with sufficient care and attention to lay the grounds of a fair critical opinion, much less of a personal feeling. It was the same, I found, with Byron and Moore. He had read

only enough of the first to feel that, with great poetical powers, and deep natural sensibilities, he was "a bold bad man," and of the second that he was a "pretty" poet; and he had no interest in going further. There was no room in his head (he declared) for new poets, without disturbing or displacing those who had been all in all to him through life in that capacity; and he was not disposed to risk the consequences of any change in his opinions and feelings in these respects.

Perhaps this determination may be regarded as one of the many happy results of that strong and clear good sense which was the marking and guiding feature of Mr. Plumer Ward's singularly varied intellect, which included a greater number and amount of what are usually deemed incompatible qualities than any I have ever met with, either in life or in books—all of them being held in due order and subjection by that admirable "common sense" just alluded to. With the world-wisdom of a sage of the olden time he united the enthusiasm of a youthful poet; to the mental grasp and moral ken of a recluse philosopher he added the

delicate perception and refined tact of a man of the world, in the highest and most comprehensive sense of the phrase; with that power of steadfast thought and severe reasoning which is so rare in any but those who devote their lives to these as a duty or a profession, he alternated the impulsiveness of early youth, the softness and sensibility of girlhood, and the playfulness and animal spirits of a child.

The result of all this was, that there has rarely been a man so singularly fitted to please in society, and who did please so many different classes and grades of persons; none who ever displeased so few: for even those (and there are such) who were disposed to disparage, or at least to underrate, his writings, were invariably fascinated by his social converse.

The reason seems to have been that Plumer Ward was "all things to all men," and to all women too, without for an instant compromising his own self-respect, or departing from the natural bent of his temper and tone of mind. So many-sided was his intellect, and so perfect the reflective power of

each separate and distinct phase of it, that no aspect of our human nature could be presented to it without recognising and greeting its representative, and sympathizing with it as with another self.

It is, perhaps, still more to the purpose of these pages to observe, that I have never seen so singular and marked a correspondence between a writer and his works, as in the case of Plumer Ward; not in a general sense (which in this case would be no sense at all), but in reference to the particular and marking *personal* features of his various productions. In this respect no man ever wrote more directly and distinctly *from himself*. And yet no man was ever less of an egotist, or had less of intellectual vanity, in the disparaging sense of those phrases.

So true is this latter fact, that the almost incredulous wonder he felt and expressed at the admiration his works excited in those who duly appreciated them, sometimes assumed the appearance of an affectation of humility and modesty; whereas so real was his diffidence as to his own powers and their results, that it has, even in my own case,

more than once led to a feeling of almost painful restraint in my correspondence with him, from finding that the simple and natural expression of my feelings (which his habit of always consulting me on his works, while they were in progress, rendered absolutely necessary) had led, on more than one occasion, to a half suspicion on his part of flattery and insincerity on mine, which almost threatened to disturb the cordiality of our friendship.

But I am in some degree departing from my design of pointing out the *personal* correspondence existing between Plumer Ward and the chief individual portraits that his writings have impressed upon their readers.

There was something in the face of Plumer Ward singularly indicative of those two leading but rarely combined features of his writings, the union of which distinguishes them from all others of their class, namely, the astonishing shrewdness and sagacity of their views and delineations of our common nature, as influenced and modified by the existing condition of society; and those contrasting views and delineations of that same

nature, as chiefly referable to individual habits, temperaments, and idiosyncrasies.

As these Recollections are specially addressed to those who are intimately acquainted with Plumer Ward's writings, it would be superfluous to do more than allude in passing to such characters as *Tremaine*, *De Vere*, and *De Clifford*, on the one hand; and such as *Herbert* and *Harclai*, or *Manners* and *Flowerdale*, on the other.

And this remarkable contrast was depicted in the face of the writer, in a way that was almost startling. Its effect was increased, too, by the singular physical resemblance which the upper part of his face bore to that of Sir Walter Scott; a resemblance which (probably on account of its marked discrepancy with the lower part of the face) was rarely noticed by casual observers, but when once seen or pointed out, could never again be overlooked or forgotten.

With the almost preternatural shrewdness and penetration of the brows and eyes, however, the resemblance of Plumer Ward to Walter Scott ended. The steadfast firmness

of purpose indicated by the strong nose of the latter was wanting in the former; so also was that somewhat heavy, sluggish, yet worldly character which marked the lower part of the face of the author of "Waverley;" and in place of these was (about the mouth especially) an almost boyish hilarity of expression, which seemed to preclude all idea of thought, care, or world-wisdom—least of all of authorship.

Pursuing this point a step further, it may be difficult to imagine beforehand how the cold and world-wearied, the fastidious and aristocratic, the proud and sensitive "Tremaine," and the cordial, warm-souled, hearty, happy, headlong, hail-fellow-well-met Jack Careless, could have been, as it were, *personally* suggested and shadowed forth to the mind by one and the same living individual. Yet such was undoubtedly the case—so much so, that, with those who intimately knew the writer, and had looked at the characters in question with something more than a mere circulating-library ken, it was impossible not to feel that they were self-derived.

It was the same with the stately and

magnificent Lord Rochfort, and the simple and humble-minded Fowerdale, the "Man of Content," in "De Vere." With his ordinary guests about him, at Gilston or in town, or in his set visits to his country neighbours, Mr. Plumer Ward was a model of the retired statesman, the lord of acres, and the "Fine Old English Gentleman;"—at his dinner-table as many attendants as guests; the entire service of silver; the fare *recherché* to the extreme of cost and fastidiousness; his equipages, on set occasions, in the old and lordly taste of the last century—four horses, with postilions in jockey caps, and mounted footmen.

On the other hand, in his daily intercourse with his neighbour tenants, or their wives and daughters, Mr. Ward was a very Sir Roger de Coverley in simplicity and *bonhommie;* and I never remember to have heard him describe the enjoyment of anything with half so much gusto as he did that of a "bacon and cabbage" dinner (all he could get) at a little public-house in a rural village near town (Walthamstow, I think), where he had gone alone to look at the house

in which he first went to school, sixty years before.*

This point might be pursued, with more or less of personal application, through a large number of the chief individual portraits which occur in Plumer Ward's works. But I will close the speculation (such it will be deemed by some) by observing, that at least he himself would not have wholly repudiated the impeachment; on the contrary, he sometimes gave the clue to it, both in his conversation and his letters;—and it may be interesting to note here that the character in particular between which and his own he was the least unwilling that a resemblance should be discerned was that of *Manners*, in "De Clifford," as the following extracts from two different letters will show. They were written to me at the time that "De Clifford"

* In relating to me this little adventure, he told me that he had introduced himself to the owner of the house (then a well-appointed gentleman's mansion) in his own name, as the only legitimate means of attaining his object; had stated that object, and been received most courteously, and pressed to stay to dinner, but had preferred to take "pot luck" at the little wayside inn.

was passing through the press. I shall give the entire letters in their place; but these brief extracts seem called for here, to excuse the personal nature of some of the foregoing remarks.

Speaking of his being left alone for the day on account of his family having gone "to leave all our duties with the Queen Dowager" (who was visiting in the neighbourhood of his then residence, Okeover Hall, Staffordshire), he continues:—

"Thank Heaven, I myself have done with etiquette, and have reached that happy time when I have a *legitimate* right (which *you* have only *usurped*) to sit all the morning, and even to pace my garden, *en robe de chambre*. In short (except that I am far happier in a wife with whom I am absolutely every hour more and more in love, even in the *admiring* sense of the phrase), there is a certain Mr. Manners in the MS., between whom and myself I request and desire you will discover a considerable affinity. This I tell you, for your comfort, against the time when you shall be near seventy-six. It is really certain that, much

as I enjoyed myself in my youth, I am, I believe I may say, happier than ever I was in my life; and as this place,* though it may not be the cause, is certainly the scene of my happiness, you must not be surprised if your anticipations as to Mr. De Clifford are not realized, and that the winter will probably not see me among you. Though not so splendid, I love this abode, particularly the exterior, and I also love my society, better than those of Hertfordshire. I have not so fine a park, but I have Dovedale; I have not a house that covers an acre of ground, but neither does it cost above three hundred a year to keep it warm. On the other hand, I am not here one of a band of cockneys, whose hearts are all in the city, though their bodies affect groves and fields, (sprung up, too, like mushrooms), but, for a time at least,† feel the representative (though *jure uxoris et vitrici*) of a family nine hundred years old,

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* Okeover Hall.

† During the minority of the young heir, Mr. Charles Okeover, son of Mrs. Plumer Ward by her first husband.

flourishing and fructifying all that time on the same spot.

"Prejudice and illusion, you will say. To which I reply—how much happier, in a thousand instances, than reality! In short, ever since I could read, I have felt that I would rather be Sir Roger de Coverley than Cæsar; and here, at least, I am more like him than at Gilston."

Again, in the postscript to a subsequent letter, he says:—

"I am quite glad that I did not send off this before to-day's letters came in, as it gives me an opportunity of adding my thanks (how due!) for all the kind and gratifying things you say about points and persons,* as to which I had some little anxiety. That you should speak of *Manners* and *Lady Hungerford* as you do, is, I assure you, not only most pleasant, but most encouraging, when, from my own doubts of the execution, I wanted encouragement. Lady A—— (an excellent judge, being herself one of the most sensible and best bred women in

* In "De Clifford," then passing through the press.

England) allayed much of my fear, but you have converted it into confidence; and I own I grew so fond of *Manners* myself that, setting all author's feelings aside, I am fonder of you for seeming fond of him."

VI.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF THE AUTHOR OF "TREMAINE."

As the following personal sketch of Mr. Plumer Ward belongs to about the period more immediately referred to in the preceding sections, I will insert it here. It was written as part of a series of Pen and Ink Portraits supposed to be taken at a West End Club House:—

Observe (as he stands with his back to the fire, at the upper extremity of the room) that tall and somewhat stately, but slim figure, perfectly upright, and with the head thrown slightly back, giving to the air and bearing an aristocratic cast, without interfering with that bland amenity which keeps possession of all the features of a face wherein years and the spirit of youth blend together in friendly contention, and put to shame the

unwise and futile axiom of the old song, which declares that—

"Crabbed age and youth
Cannot live together."

It is true that "crabbed" age and youth are at variance: as what is not at variance with "*crabbed* age?" But the couplet would apply the epithet as one proper to age, and necessarily belonging to it; which is not more just than it would be to apply it to youth itself. That this is so, witness the very remarkable countenance before us—in respect of which, whether the thoughts, feelings, and associations that give light and life to it emanate from a mind that has counted sixteen winters or sixty, would puzzle the most penetrating glance to tell, from the expression alone. Or rather it demonstrates that the mind and heart which speak there are instruments upon which the hand of Time has no power—that,

"Age cannot dim,
Nor custom stale, the infinite variety"

of the intellectual music resulting from the harmonious conformity of all the parts and particulars of which they are made up.

Perhaps there is nothing in connexion with our intellectual nature more immediately gratifying in itself, and more directly and surely leading to after gratification, than the contemplation of a character in which the qualities and attributes we have referred to are so happily allied as they are in that of the author of "Tremaine," and the happy results of which are so legibly written on their visible exponents. If there is a fear more pervading than all others that oppress the human mind after a certain age, it is that of *growing old.* But that it is to all intents and purposes "a lost fear," the example before us may demonstrate. If you are to believe Mr. Plumer Ward himself, he is considerably more than sixty years of age. If you are to trust to the indications set forth by nature in his face, his person, his voice, his air, his carriage, and the ever-springing green that overspreads the pleasant pastures of his mind and heart, you must conclude that the world and its ways are as new to him as to a boy of sixteen bred up on a mountain side. Where, then, shall we strike the happy mean? He *cannot* be so old as he says. And yet

he is among the last men to make himself out older than his certificate of birth. The secret is, not that—

"Years have brought the *philosophic* mind,"

but that they have brought something infinitely better—the mind where philosophy, humanity, and the refined and epicurean spirit of enjoyment, are so beautifully and inextricably blended, that they form a perpetual spring of new and happy thoughts, which—

"Put a spirit of youth in everything,"

and which spirit ever reflects itself back in corresponding exponents, upon all who look with a wise and instructed eye in that mirror of the heart, the "human face divine."

Wordsworth, in his beautiful stanzas, entitled "A Poet's Epitaph," says, addressing the supposed passer-by—

"Art thou a statesman, in the van
Of public business train'd and bred?
First learn to love one living man;
Then mayst thou think upon the dead."

How generally true is the inference here implied, witness the iron or oaken faces of the lines of "statesmen" who nightly occupy

the Treasury and Opposition Benches of our national assemblies! And to prove the rule by the exception, witness the face of the remarkable person whose portrait we are now painting. He has been not only

"In the van
Of public business train'd and bred,"

but has passed twenty consecutive years of a laborious life there; and yet, behold him as we have pictured him above; in freshness of feeling and simplicity of thought, he is a child; in tenderness of heart and gentleness of sympathy with the pleasures and the pains of his fellow-beings, his nature retains the almost feminine softness and impressibility of early youth; in vigour of thought and ardour of spirit, he is like one just entering on his career of ambitious manhood; in deep and quick sagacity and matured knowledge he would seem to have touched the goal itself; and, finally, in his deep conviction of the incapacity of all temporary and sublunary things to satisfy the cravings of the human heart and mind, or prevent them from at last returning to prey or to banquet (as the case may be) upon their own self-

engendered feelings and imaginations, and in his firm determination to act upon that conviction, and retire from the world to the "populous solitude" of his own thoughts and affections, he reaches and illustrates that last stage of intellectual advancement which teaches us that

"'Tis in ourselves that we are thus and thus,"

and that when the world and its works have ceased to be sufficient to us, we then, and not till then, may, if we please, become sufficient to ourselves.

Such is R. Plumer Ward; the favourite protegé of Pitt; the friend and companion of Canning and Peel; the right hand of every department of the public service to which he has belonged in connexion with the Government of his country; the pet of the female world of high society, from the most antiquated of its dowagers to the most blooming of its newly-budding beauties; and (best of all in *our* estimation) the writer of "Tremaine" and "De Vere"—the two most delightful, and at the same time the most instructive works of our day, in that most delightful and in-

structive of all classes of works, those illustrating manners and society as these affect and are affected by the human mind and heart.

Should the more sedate of our female friends desire to be made acquainted with more *particulars* respecting the person of their favourite writer (for such we must believe him to be, the Bulwers, Trollopes, Gores, &c., of the circulating library notwithstanding), we may inform them that his head and features are small as compared with the commanding height and carriage of his figure; that his eyes have the piercing expression of some of the gentler species of the hawk, and are overshadowed by brows that bear a remarkable likeness to the very remarkable ones of Walter Scott; that his nose is slightly *retroussé*, which, in connexion with an expression of sly humour about the mouth, gives a slightly sarcastic character to the general expression of the countenance; that the forehead and upper part of the head are wholly bald, the hair which remains being of light brown tinged with grey; and that the whole

face is overspread with a bloom like that of youth, and a shining smoothness, that correspond, to a degree almost of strangeness, with the intellectual youth which is the most striking characteristic of this accomplished person.

APPENDIX TO VOL. I.

I AM in possession of an unpublished drama by Charles Lamb, which, as it is unquestionably his first substantive production, and dates at a very early period of his life, may claim to rank among the most interesting and valuable of our "Curiosities of Literature." It is a complete Opera, in three acts, and the numerous songs and concerted pieces are written expressly to popular melodies of the time, in the manner afterwards adopted with such brilliant success by Moore.

Of the existence of this drama not one of Lamb's friends (myself included) was aware until after his death. Unfortunately, I am not able to account, even by remote conjecture, for this latter circumstance, though Lamb was the last person in the world to keep a secret, especially his own. This, however, only renders the drama still more an object of literary interest and curiosity, considering that its authenticity is placed beyond question, by every portion of it, even to the minutest alterations, erasures, &c., being in his own handwriting*—a hand that is too peculiar to be mis-

* See the fac-simile at the commencement of this volume.

taken by any one who has once seen a page of it. Moreover, though this drama is entirely different in its general style, as well as in the character of the materials employed in its construction, from anything in Lamb's other writings, there are passages in it which would confirm, if necessary, by internal evidence, the unimpeachable testimony of the handwriting.

I have used every means at my disposal, but in vain, for ascertaining the early history of this autograph. I have searched in vain for any *direct* glimpse of such history in the "Life and Letters" and the "Final Memorials" of Mr. Justice Talfourd. But I find a passage in the last-named work, in a letter from Miss Lamb to Mrs. Hazlitt, which will, perhaps, leave as little doubt in the reader's mind as it does in mine, as to the true origin of this production. The passage I allude to is as follows:—

"The Skeffington is quite out now, my brother having got merry with claret and Tom Sheridan. *This visit, and the occasion of it, is a profound secret,* and therefore I tell it to nobody but you and Mrs. Reynolds. Through the medium of Wroughton,* there came an invitation and proposal from T. S. that C. L. should write some scenes in a speaking pantomime, the other parts of which Tom now, and his father formerly, have manufactured between them. So in the Christmas holidays my brother and his two great associates, we expect, will all three be damned together; that is, I mean, if Charles's share, which is done and sent in, is accepted."—(*Final Memorials*, 129, 130.)

* At that time stage manager of Drury Lane Theatre.